



Women in Public

Elaine Kahn

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"Elaine Kahn's poems touch me somewhere deep."—**Kim Gordon**

In *Women in Public*, the debut full-length collection by poet/musician Elaine Kahn, personal philosophies and collective admissions are put through the corporeal grinder, harnessing the sensual as a medium for the cerebral in order to negotiate the "feminine condition" of being simultaneously othered and consumed. By turns seductive and self-deprecating, *Women in Public* navigates a world where the erotics of the body and mind do battle against the constructs that would demean and define them, using lyric, fragment, humor, and repetition to create a space flexible enough to hold the many contradictions of reality. Where expectations and desires can be piled too easily upon the body, Kahn digs in her heels, writing in attempt to liberate physical form from society's confines.

Praise for *Women in Public*:

"'Do you think that you are greater than a mom?' This is an intensely honest, honestly intense poetry. Humorous, carnal, accusatory, celebratory—*Women in Public* tells me to get lost so I do. When I find myself later, I'm re-reading *Women in Public*."—**Rod Smith**

"In these exhilarating poems, Elaine Kahn shoots from the groin, championing a ferociousness that rages against asperity while playfully seducing the reader to misbehave. Hers is a realm where oceans beat against genitals, and Hannah Wilke warms the earth. I don't want to let go of *Women in Public* for I want its boldness all to myself."—**Dodie Bellamy**

About the Author:

Musician, poet, artist, **Elaine Kahn** was born in Evanston, Illinois and is currently based in Oakland, California. She received an MFA from the Iowa Writers' Workshop and a BA from California College of the Arts. Kahn is the author of three poetry chapbooks, *A Voluptuous Dream During an Eclipse* (2012), *Customer* (2010), and *Radiant Bottle Caps* (2008), and is a contributor to Art Papers. Her music project, Horsebladder, has toured widely throughout the U.S. and Canada. She is also co-founder of the feminist puppet troop P. Splash Collective and managing editor of the small press Flowers & Cream.

Women in Public Details

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From Reader Review *Women in Public* for online ebook

Jess says

Bought it at City Lights because that's where sometimes you just grab a book of poetry. I liked some lines, but I just didn't get a bunch of it.

"I understand myself
only insofar
as it is funny"

also

"Mom says it is not a good idea
to feel too good about yourself

The feeling of getting what you want
is the feeling of nothing
she says
Be productive"

Simon says

Grotesque and sort of terrifying poems spoken in the most gorgeous voice. Rolling around in the pressures and pleasures of being a body and feeling both sickened and ecstatic at the fact. I loved it.

Elizabeth says

Caveat: I received a free copy of this book through the Goodreads First Reads program. *Women in Public* by Elaine Kahn is a short pocketbook of abstract poetry. As I read through this collection of very modern poems, I was wondering if I was reading the same book as other reviewers. I enjoy poetry that is concrete but with deeper symbolic meaning beneath the words. This poetry was often very abstract with a stream of consciousness style to it. The author seemed to need to work profanity, sex and/or sexual body parts into almost every work whether the topics added to the poems or not. While I have no objection to any of those topics, they felt gratuitous and out of place in most of the poems. I left all of the poems with a sense of "huh?" I kept thinking the next poem would have to be better, but it never was. There were no deep or profound thoughts that left me in awe. I'm not even sure whom to pass the book onto as it's not one I would recommend.

Amanda Moore says

There are some stunners here, especially the title poem, but the book was not as tight and cohesive as it could be.

Tracy says

I read this book in public - on the elliptical and poolside.

Mind / body / shit they're all that make a women. All the pieces that a body carries. I really love this book. I didn't care what faces of glee / disgust / agreement I made while reading because they are all parts of being a women in public.

"Life imagines me
to be benign
but I am randomly dementing.
What I feel
is my own free death
and my own free life."
from WILL MY LOVE BE LAME (93)

Gina says

loved this so much— one of my favorite things i've read this year, poetry or prose

Mina-Louise Berggren says

Very sexually grotesque that felt to me completely unnecessary and uncomfortable. Otherwise just underwhelming.
