



Theories of Falling

Sandra Beasley

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Poetry. THEORIES OF FALLING is the winner of the 2007 New Issues Poetry Prize. Judge Marie Howe said of THEORIES OF FALLING, "I kept coming back to these poems--the tough lyric voice that got under my skin. Clear, intent, this poet doesn't want to fool herself or anybody else. Desire pushes defeat against the wall, and the spirit climbs up from underground." "Sandra Beasley slices her way down the page with precision and punch. Her haunting 'Allergy Girl' series will set off such an itch, I doubt you'll ever fully recover...This poet leaves us to smolder and ache in small kingdoms where 'even the tame dogs dream of biting clear to the bone.'"--Aimee Nezhukumatathil.

Theories of Falling Details

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Author : Sandra Beasley

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From Reader Review Theories of Falling for online ebook

Antonia says

I already knew, from having read Beasley's work online, that I was a fan before reading this collection. But really, this is an astonishing and accomplished first book.

While I very much liked the "Allergy Girl" sequence, I thought that the poems later in the book (especially the third section) were more accomplished.

The speaker is educated, intellectual, wise perhaps beyond her years. Truly an artist.

Strong voice and beautiful language, effective images, and stellar endings. So what else could you ask for? I'm bowled over. And I should add, I found this inspiring to read as a poet. It make me want to push the books aside and get back to writing.

Oh! Just found out that she has another collection out. Hurray. I'm all over it. . . .

My only carp. Here we go again:

"Do you know that when I lay down, the loosening muscles // cause me to grow an inch taller?"

Here are some poems available online:

"Drink"

"You"

"The Angels," "My Los Alamos," and "Fireproof" from *Coconut*. ("The Angels" is one of my favorites from *Theories of Falling*.)

And there are a lot of poems to read and hear (as well as some Q & A with Beasley) at [From the Fishhouse](#).

Here are links to 3 poems not from this volume, but published in *Poetry Magazine*.

Cedric says

Disclaimer: I may be biased a bit as I went to grad school w/ the author. Short and sweet: I loved the book. I found her work to be difficult in school, but always beautiful to the ear...as a mutual friend put it, "I love the way her work sounds coming out of my mouth." Indeed. The book seems to be very personal, about family & relationships, and because these are things we can all relate to, I think the work feels familiar. There are so many ridiculously beautiful and clever lines I could quote, but I don't feel like it...get the book. And go American University MFA'ers!

?????? says

I grabbed this on a whim because I saw that it was edited by Marie Howe, and I had just finished reading a collection of hers that I really enjoyed (*What the Living Do*) and it seemed serendipitous. From one allergy girl to another, I really enjoy the way that she elevates the imagery of allergy attacks, and this has become one of my favorite collections.

Barry says

One of my favorite poetry collections. In a rare treat, I got to see Sandra read earlier this year. Such a great poet that everyone needs to give a try.

Karren says

Sandra Beasley's poetry not only rocks, it is rock solid good work. You have only to open to the first poem "Cherry Tomatoes" to see what I mean.

Michael says

Sandra Beasley throws a parade in Theories of Falling; a parade to impress us with the many reasons not to love her. The Allergy Girl, wasting away as an infant. Her bloodstream equal to a Fisher Price workbench. The wheezing, rashes, the dangers of a tainted kiss.

Beasley's book of poetry has a lingering quality that toys with you and requires that you pick it up again and again as if it were the antidote that saves you from something, perhaps boredom. She guarantees you can walk away from going over Niagara Falls if you do it just right. But warns you'll just die in a poor house.

There is an intimate nature here, an uncovering of truth. As if she slowly peels back layers that we might see beneath the surface of our prescribed reality to find something altogether more real than we imagined. The poems collectively have an affluence of lyricism. The substance, the metaphor all come together nicely. There is nothing more you will want, except more of her work.

As for Beasley's parade to dissuade our affection, she is indeed wasting the elephants and ticker tape, it isn't working.

Caroline says

I disagree with a few of the risks she takes, or rather, the outcome or effect of some of those risks. (For instance, I wish "The Fish" did not contain the line "once you reported our fuck rescued a dozen Croatian children.") But I do absolutely love that she takes these risks.

I find the second & third sections stronger than the first, and almost all of her endings are knock-outs. Just great.

"Theories of Non-Violence" strikes me as one of the best and most important poems of the collection, so I'll repeat it here:

Theories of Non-Violence

A frightened rabbit kicks its hind legs so hard that it can
break its own back. Someone thought to record that pain
on tape. Someone said *Shelve this under non-violent tactics*.
Just a line item, buried in daily reports from the siege:
after blasting Ozzy Osbourne and dentist drills, before using
flash bombs and gunfire, they played *Rabbit death scream*.
Repeat loop. Officers wrote the wail was like a teakettle's whistle,
but endless. My father, in uniform, used to speak of war
in terms of the sword and the scalpel. *Scalpel*, meaning we kill
only who we meant to kill. Meaning, *clean*. Meaning, *better*.
Sword, meaning we kill anyone who gets in the way.
Even now, watching news of each new each new explosion, I wait
to see if our flag flashes onto the screen. If not there's that tiny,
cool blink. *Well then*. An old lover calls to tell me they finally
made him a doctor. *First do no harm*, they made him swear.
Then they said *To save that man, you'll need a sharper knife*.

Marianne says

I was able to read an early version of the manuscript way before it was published. I'm so happy to see it in print. Fine work. Excellent poems. Sweet poet.

Wanda says

This was a tough book of poems for me to read. It challenged my brain to understand the meaning. Sandra Beasley's imagination and use of metaphors had me re-reading some poems 3-4 times. But once I got it, I found them amusing, haunting, truthful.

Nina says

Beasley covers a diverse range of topics. Although her subject matter is often not funny, she injects subtle humor into her poetry. Her metaphors are rich and unique; they speak a universal truth that makes it easy to nod your head in agreement. She writes about family relationships, lovers, friends.

One of my favorites is her long poem, Allergy Girl, which covers the different stages of life for somebody with severe, life-threatening allergies.

Danielle DeTiberus says

Sandra Beasley, you are my hero. Or are you my nemesis? This debut collection knocked my socks off (still looking for them). Has everything you come to poetry for and enough to keep you reading again and again. Really, it's that good. Also, have to admit: my vote for best book cover award. Don't forget her name-- new book coming out in April.

Alisha says

I enjoyed a Beasley reading and so bought her book. I don't know that any of her poems moved me deeply, but it was an enjoyable read, with humor sprinkled through serious and often painful scenarios. I'll reread it.

Elise says

Wow! I really enjoyed reading this collection. I love poetry, and this particular collection blew me away. I was able to meet Sandra at a poetry reading and she made all of her poems come to life even more than they already did. They were each very relatable. I have to say my favorite was the Allergy Girl series. There was so much insight into the world of a girl who had so many allergies, some fatal. So I was able to understand the author a little better. I was also able to read this and I Was The Jukebox the same day, so I'm excited to start her novel. :)

Michael says

Excellent first book. Strong voice, taut poems that evidence, observe, and comment on strong topics, situations. Plus some humor, without which poetry itself would fall into a slough of despond.

Karen says

"One of the markers of Beasley's many talents is her ability to achieve a genuine pathos through the careful sequencing of poems ... a memorable debut, thoughtful in its structure and haunting in its claims."

Review on *Galatea Resurrects*
