

THE MAYNARD | Short-form Shout Out
BODY FALLING, SUNDAY MORNING . Susana H. Case
(Milk & Cake Press, 2019)
by Jami Macarty, The Maynard Co-founder & Editor

Case's chapbook is a sequence of delineated and prose poems written in the ekphrastic mode that center their attention on the work of Frances Glessner Lee, who painstakingly recreated miniature dioramas of true crime scenes, and in the process, developed the forensics used to teach homicide detectives crime scene investigation. Case and her readers join Frances Glessner Lee to "examine the tableau" of violence against women in "gendered households," in "bedrooms," "bathrooms," and "living rooms" where "[s]o often the killer is someone you know,/ one you thought a friend." The poems, alongside the dioramas, underscore how quickly the quotidian can turn to horror: "the Libby's tomato juice/ next to the Heinz Home style soup./ A box of bullets." Lee's visual and Case's verbal recreations also bring to the fore the shocking frequency with which Lee's "five- to six-inch corpses" are "female,/ mostly." In this way, both Lee's and Case's work focuses on the conspiracy of forces in criminal cases involving violence against women—that of the perpetrator's and that of the investigators'—that allows men to get away with bloody murder. Lee's work "breaks down that gender division with depictions of domestic/ violence in feminized spaces." And, where Lee's forensics microscope leaves off, Case's poetic magnifying glass continues the critically necessary investigation of and conversation on violence against women. Both Lee and Case want "you to think/ about" the answers to such horrible questions as: "Oh God—/where is the baby girl?"; "Murder?"; "Is that what she worked/ so hard for, on her back and knees?"; "Did the husband set the scene...?"; "Who is going to inform/ the mother?" Viewing Lee's dioramas and reading Case's poems will leave you outraged that any "dead woman escaped notice." A powerful read!

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