

The background of the cover is a complex, abstract collage. It features a dominant yellow and gold color palette, with large, irregular shapes in shades of blue and white. There are also smaller, scattered elements of red and dark brown. The overall effect is a dense, textured composition that suggests a rich, multi-layered visual narrative.

MAR

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her brother was and the relationships he had with the people close to him. They're like puzzle pieces, connecting to form a picture of a loving brother, father, husband, son, and friend, creating an emotional reading experience.

—Tanja Vierrether, *MAR*

Museum of Stones by Lynn Lurie. Wilkes-Barre, PA: Etruscan Press, 2019. 94 pages. \$16.00, paper.

In her latest, Lynn Lurie tells the story of a mother who struggles to raise a son who is different through a nonlinear series of beautiful, devastating, and sometimes funny moments in this mother's life. The nameless narrator's equally nameless son is good with numbers and builds brilliant inventions even as a child, but is ill throughout his childhood, struggles to learn how to tie his shoes, and is terrified of water for much of his life because "it is ... unpredictable, [he has] no way of controlling where it goes or what it does, and, over time, it dissolves all things." From the moment of his birth and throughout his adulthood, we see the narrator constantly plagued by anxiety, stress, helplessness, and guilt as she watches her son grow. Every time he is sick, she is afraid he will die. When he struggles to fit in with others, she blames herself, seeing it as a failure of her parenting. Through the narrator's near constant worry for her son, Lurie explores a difficult and darker side to motherhood.

Museum of Stones reads much like a long prose poem, making use of stripped-down language that prioritizes imagery over interiority. The book is full of beautiful lines and begins with some of the most stunning ones, drawing the reader in immediately with images like "his face suctioned beneath transparent wrap, like meat." Lurie also jumps back and forth between various stages of the

mother and son's lives throughout the book, sometimes even jumping back to the mother's childhood as well. The beautiful poetic language combined with this nonlinear style make the book feel like a long dream, like memories strung together.

While most of the book is spent in a state of terror for the narrator, it is clear that the terror is caused by the deep love that she has for her son. She wants so desperately to see him grow up well and live a good life that she sacrifices her own health at times. *Museum of Stones* shows the terrifying realities of what motherhood and unconditional love can feel like, but ends on a peaceful note, where "All the pieces of [the narrator's] face are where they are supposed to be, no distortions or duplications, not even when I drop a pebble and watch the water ripple outward."

—Ali Miller, *MAR*

When They Say You Can't Go Home Again, What They Mean Is You Were Never There by Marty McConnell. Evansville, IL: Southern Indiana Review Press, 2018. 77 pages. \$15.95, paper.

When They Say You Can't Go Home Again is a book that's not afraid to tackle the apocalypse. McConnell heralds the end of the world with the certainty of both prophet and scientist. In her third collection, winner of the Michael Waters Poetry Prize, the end of the world is not a controversy up for debate, but an inevitability, an act already done, which cannot be undone. The first bittersweet poem tells its audience, "I know // this world is going / to end, I feel it / in the concrete // and the guttering light," but lingers on the natural beauty of the world and the moment of the poem, filled with flowers and light and birdsong. With its unflinching certainty of destruction and painful hope for the future, it sets the tone perfectly for the collection.