

# A Door with a Voice



Poems by Katie Manning

**a door**

**with**

**a**

**voice**

**poems**

**by**

**Katie Manning**



## **Artist's Statement**

I am tired of people taking language from the Bible out of context and using it as a weapon against other people, so I started taking language from the Bible out of context and using it to create art. My process was to use the last chapter from one book of the Bible as a word bank for each poem. This is either the most heretical or the most reverent thing I've ever written.

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# The Book of Evil

all that remains of Leviticus

make  
a person  
a male  
a female  
a person  
a male  
a female  
a person  
a male  
and  
a female  
of silver  
a person  
or more  
a male  
a female

whoever would  
pass  
may pick  
the good  
the bad or  
any substitution

anyone  
too poor

will  
make  
an animal

such an  
animal must  
wish  
to  
be  
something holy  
and  
it will become

a field



# The Book of Men

all that remains of Numbers

the family heads  
came and spoke before  
the heads of the  
families

they said  
*our*  
*daughters*  
*may marry anyone they please*  
*as long as they marry*

*every daughter*  
*must marry*  
*pass from one*  
*man*  
*to another*

so  
daughters did as  
commanded—married  
their cousins  
remained  
on the plains

# The Book of Dues

all that remains of Judges

*come out to join in the dancing*  
the LORD said

early the next day  
the LORD  
was to be put to death

the  
daughters  
sat  
weeping bitterly  
*why has this happened*  
*why*

they counted the fighting  
women

four hundred young women  
had never slept

the people grieved

the young women  
settled

everyone did

# The Book of Thru

all that remains of Ruth

love  
gave birth to a son  
in  
old age

the child  
cared for  
living  
and they named him

no one

except him

will raise  
the dead

he was the father of  
the father of  
the father of  
the father of  
the father of  
the father of  
the father of  
the father of  
the father of  
the father of  
the father

# The Book of O

all that remains of Job

I know  
no purpose  
the LORD  
replied

you asked  
who is this

I spoke

I am angry  
with my  
selves

I will accept  
the trouble  
of fourteen thousand sheep  
and beautiful  
daughters

after this  
he saw his children and their children  
die

# The Book of Verbs

all that remains of Proverbs

listen  
my womb

do not spend your strength  
on kings

it is not for kings

crave  
and  
let  
be

bring  
life  
like  
food  
is  
food

consider  
a field and  
plant  
strong  
fingers

open  
hands  
when it snows

make  
days

watch

do  
not eat  
praises

# The Song of Sons

all that remains of Song of Songs

if I found you  
I would  
drink  
the nectar of  
head  
and  
arm

wake  
mother

place me  
over your heart

your arm  
is  
strong as death  
unyielding as  
love

a  
breast  
is a door  
with  
a  
voice

let me hear

# The Book of Is

all that remains of Isaiah

heaven is my  
foot

where is  
my hand

the  
humble  
word  
is like one who kills  
and  
worships  
the dead

when I spoke  
no one listened

hear the word of the Lord

that noise  
is the sound of the Lord  
in labor

nurse and  
drink deeply  
like grass



the hand of the Lord will be  
language

the new heavens  
dead bodies  
that  
will not die

# The Book of Laminate

all that remains of Lamentations

we  
mothers  
are weary  
no more

we get  
our skin  
hot as an oven  
violate  
princes  
with  
our  
music

dancing  
has fallen  
to us  
because of  
our hearts  
these things our eyes  
always forget

# The Book of Human

all that remains of Nahum

lies  
crack  
whips  
and  
flash  
corpses

nothing can heal  
endless  
news

lust  
declares  
*lift your skirts over your face*

are you better than  
infants  
in chains

you will go  
like  
ripe fruit  
into the mouth of the eater  
wide open to  
consume you

like a swarm of locusts  
like  
stars in the sky  
strip  
and  
fly away  
on a cold day  
when the sun appears  
and no one knows where  
to rest

# The Book of Calm

all that remains of Malachi

the day is coming  
like a furnace

every  
day  
will set  
you  
on fire

you will go out and frolic like  
ashes  
on the day  
that  
dreadful day  
when  
the LORD  
will come and strike the land with  
children

# The Book of Ma

all that remains of Mark

a  
mother  
might go to a  
tomb  
trembling and bewildered  
and  
ask  
a young man  
in a white robe  
who  
is not  
there

*are*  
*you*  
*afraid*

# The Book of Norms

all that remains of Romans

Jesus  
was  
in Christ before I was

he  
meets  
me  
at  
my  
house  
to  
help  
me  
convert

the Lord  
has been a mother to me

the Lord's  
kiss  
will  
crush  
me

# The Book of Pain

all that remains of Ephesians

you  
are  
the earth

do not exasperate your  
heart

parents  
obey  
children  
first  
as slaves

children  
treat your slaves  
as  
your ground

this  
is  
everything  
you  
know



# The Book of This Season

all that remains of First Thessalonians

the day  
will come like  
a pregnant woman

this day  
will not escape

people say  
God  
should surprise you like  
labor pains  
or  
a  
kiss

night or  
day  
in fact  
do not belong  
to  
us

let us  
live together  
and  
reject every kind of  
sleep

# The Book of Hind

all that remains of Third John

God  
is well spoken of by  
God

what is evil  
what is good  
what is

you are  
what you are doing

my children are walking  
but I  
do not imitate  
anyone

please send  
no help

you know that  
God  
loves to  
stop  
by



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## About the Author

Katie Manning is the author of three poetry chapbooks, including *The Gospel of the Bleeding Woman* (Wipf & Stock, 2013), and one full-length poetry collection, *Tasty Other*, which won the 2016 Main Street Rag Poetry Book Award. She has received *The Nassau Review's* Author Award for Poetry, and her writing has been published in *Fairy Tale Review*, *New Letters*, *Poet Lore*, *So to Speak*, and elsewhere. She is the founding Editor-in-Chief of *Whale Road Review* and an Associate Professor of Writing at Point Loma Nazarene University in San Diego. Find her online at [www.katiemanningpoet.com](http://www.katiemanningpoet.com).

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