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.
Contents

The Book of Evil  Leviticus
The Book of Men  Numbers
The Book of Dues  Judges
The Book of Thru  Ruth
The Book of O  Job
The Book of Verbs  Proverbs
The Song of Sons  Song of Songs
The Book of Is  Isaiah
The Book of Laminate  Lamentations
The Book of Human  Nahum
The Book of Calm  Malachi
The Book of Ma  Mark
The Book of Norms  Romans
The Book of Pain  Ephesians
The Book of This Season  First Thessalonians
The Book of Hind  Third John
The Book of Evil
   all that remains of Leviticus

make
a person
a male
a female
a person
a male
a female
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

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

tthey 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
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

cchildren
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
Acknowledgments

Thanks to the editors who first published these poems in the following venues:

*Anomoly Literary Journal*: “The Book of Human” and “The Book of This Season”

*The Chaotic Review*: “The Book of Men”


*San Diego Reader*: “The Book of Calm” and “The Book of Hind”

*Quail Bell Magazine*: “The Book of Dues” and “The Book of Thru”

*Queen Mob’s Tea House*: “The Book of Verbs,” “The Song of Sons,” “The Book of Is,” and “The Book of Laminate”
Special Thanks

My deepest thanks to Tom Allbaugh, Diane Glancy, and Christine Kern for giving me thorough feedback on each poem and encouraging me to continue this project. I’m more grateful than I can say.

Thanks also to Ruben Quesada, Thom Caraway, and Nicelle Davis for affirming my work by publishing other poems from this project in *Cobalt, Rock & Sling*, and *The Poetry Circus* anthology.

Thanks to *Image* and to Azusa Pacific University for the gift of writing time at the Glen West Workshop in Santa Fe and at the Serra Retreat Center in Malibu.

Thanks to Fox Frazier-Foley for being so enthusiastic about these poems and for giving them a home with Agape Editions, and thanks to David Adey for allowing us to use his incredible art for the cover.

Thanks to all of my family and friends who send me poems, read my poems, and talk with me about poetry and faith.

And thanks especially to Jon, Elliott, and Julian, my biggest fans and dearest loves.
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.
Copyright © 2016 by Katie Manning
All rights reserved

Published by Agape Editions
Los Angeles, CA
http://agapeeditions.com

ISBN: 978-1-939675-28-6

Editor: Fox Frazier-Foley
fox@agapeeditions.com

Colophon:
This book is set in Bell MT Regular and Geneva.

Cover Art: David Adey
Book & Cover Design: Fox Frazier-Foley