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NEW SIGLIO TITLE: SPRING 2013

BOUGH DOWN BY KAREN GREEN

ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL EXPRESSIONS
OF LOVE AND LOSS YOU WILL EVER READ . . .

With fearlessness and grace, Karen Green has created a profoundly beautiful and intensely moving lament. In this unusual narrative constructed of crystalline fragments of prose interspersed with miniature collages, Green conjures the urgency and inscrutability of a world shaped by love and loss.

In charting her passage through grief, she summons memories and the machinations of the interior mind with poetic precision, a startling sense of humor, and an acute awareness of contradictory truths and of the volatility of language. Her everyday world is populated by unnamed, mutable characters who—while drawn from life—are also portents, ghosts, and figments of the imagination. Like the snippets of Billie Holiday lyrics scattered throughout, Green distills each moment, locating the sweet and the bitter, with the emotional gravity of music.

In counterpoint, tiny visual collages punctuate the text, made of salvaged language and scraps of the material world: pages torn from both beloved and obscure books; bits of love letters, medical records, condolences, and paper refuse; old postage stamps and the albums which classify them. Made not to illustrate the words but as a parallel process of invocation and erasure, pilfering and remaking, each collage—and the creative act of making it—evinces the reassembling of life.

Bough Down is a book of dualities, probing the small spaces between lucidity and madness, desire and ambivalence, the living and the absent. Both an evocation of her love for her husband David Foster Wallace and an act of defiance in the face of devastating loss, *Bough Down* is a lapidary, keenly observed and composed work, awash with the honesty of an open heart.

An excerpt from *Bough Down* is featured in the Winter 2012-2013 issue of BOMB Magazine.

KAREN GREEN is an artist and writer living in Northern California.

One of the most beautiful expressions of love and loss you will ever read. *Bough Down* put me in mind somehow of the Portuguese *fado*: a lament rendered so precisely it becomes luminous and affirmative. This is a profound, lovely, bitterly funny book that fulfills the first requirement of great art: it is magical.

—GEORGE SAUNDERS

In *Bough Down* Karen Green has created beautiful missives, both textual and visual, around an invisible core of grief that we all, one way or another, share. Like those great poets before her, Ann Sexton, Sylvia Plath, and Emily Dickinson, Green's poetic ear, her honed images, and her paradoxically confessional yet non-confessional voice challenge the reader to rise up to meet the demands of a wonderfully humane artistic vision. This is a stunning book.

—DAVID MEANS

Bough Down is a breathtaking lyric elegy. A fusion of poetry, prose, and visual images, it is a work of emotional acuity, quiet ferocity, and riven bravery. Its use of silence, compression, detail, and the fragmentary is powerful and rich. I can't call to mind a book that centers on loss which better sustains its summoning, grief, anger, probing, intelligence, and dignity. Wow! I am still in its grip.

—AMY GERSTLER

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