



Dear Sound of Footstep: Essays

Ashley Butler

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In her daring essay collection *Dear Sound of Footstep*, author Ashley Butler engages the reader in an exploration of her mother's death and an estranged paternal relationship. As illusions of a celestial umbrella slowly disappear, she begins a search for answers within the infinite. The candid narrative evolves into a stunning, abstract deconstruction of time and space, piloting the reader precariously close to the unanswered question, "Why are we here?" Among the subjects she touches on: the fastest man on earth, wind farms and tunnels, and the anechoic (without echo) chamber at Harvard University. We hear about some of history's oddest seekers of spiritual and scientific knowledge: Konstantin Tsiolkovsky, the father of cosmonautics; Yves Klein, the "artist of space"; Russian futurist Nikolai Federov; and Harry Houdini, hanging headfirst over a crowd in Times Square. The essays are a blend of conventional narrative, aphorism ("The aphorism is a form of eternity," said Nietzsche), lyrical imagery, and language, with insights like, "A voice begins with the thought that must be set apart from a body." Butler's collection has a true magic of its own, at times both brutal and gorgeous, but always coming back to an empathy of spirit and intelligence far beyond Butler's years.

Ashley Butler was born and raised in Virginia. She has a BA from Columbia University and an MFA from the University of Iowa. Her work has appeared in *Ninth Letter*, *jubilat*, *Gulf Coast*, *Creative Nonfiction*, and *POOL*. She lives in Texas.

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