



# Dark Matters

*Katharyn Howd Machan*

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Fairy tales and myths inform this collection of poems written by a woman who has often danced or fled the shadows cast by old stories. Wolves, princes, looms, combs, swans, straw, blackbirds: these images, polished to the bone by telling and retelling, take on new shape and life when infused with autobiography and lessons learned from others' choices and fates. What path can a young girl take when her red sweater grows ragged? How can a bride escape the knife poised to cut off her trusting feet? Yet, too, these poems are about survival, resilience: Penelope learns to weave for and with the women around her; a resourceful witch outwits a stickler who would silence her; a sister escapes murder and grows up into summers of wild strawberries. Ultimately, risk's rewards triumph, offering a crone's wisdom that even sadness is "tipped with stars and stars."

## Dark Matters Details

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Author : Katharyn Howd Machan

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# From Reader Review Dark Matters for online ebook

## Csimplot Simplot says

Excellent book

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## FutureCycle Press says

We are the publisher, so all of our authors get five stars from us. Excerpts:

### PAWS

“Keep talking. How did the story go?”

—Sara Eliza Johnson in “M?rchen”

It’s always the wolf. Count on it.  
Hunger just outside the door  
and the distant church bell ringing.  
Little girl in a crimson cap,  
small boy sneaking out through the gate,  
young pigs behind flimsy walls.  
Even the brother and sister, abandoned,  
would have been swallowed by shining eyes  
if the witch hadn’t taken them in.

The oldest stories are the oldest stories  
until they turn true again,  
each one a shard of mirror  
piercing our softest flesh.  
Monks may sing in midnight choir,  
but how far does their music reach?  
Look to the basket, the swallowed duck,  
the straw and the sticks shuttered tight.  
The wolf grins. Bet your life.

I haven’t lived more than sixty years  
without learning a tale or three.  
Where do my poems come from?  
Told to lie still, shut up, keep secrets,  
dark weight like a rat on my brain,  
and me just one of the many many  
praying the wolf will be caught and cut  
or shot or burned or boiled to death  
so he’ll never howl again.

## THE WOMEN WHO WRITE ABOUT ANIMALS

The women who write about animals  
carry pieces of night in their eyes.  
They howl. They climb trees  
and sharpen their claws on cool bark.  
These women learned to dream  
of roots and briars, the strength of green,  
white sand along bright streams  
for lettering secret runes.  
They grew to understand fur.  
They longed for rough tongues.  
Now their poems see in the dark.  
They go out walking on four legs  
and fear nothing that walks on two.

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