

# Tall as You Are Tall Between Them

Annie Christain

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"A fierce and frightening intelligence animates Annie Christain's Tall As You Are Tall Between Them, a book of teeming references and unsettling implications. Whether they've sprung from biblical figures, pop stars, or serial killers, these wild, wide-ranging monologues can sound like depositions or fever dreams or both, testing the limits of our empathy as they haunt and beguile: "I'll be eating packs of Kool-Aid, / waiting in your bushes so we can lock eyes." This boldly singular book feels like it has devoured whole cultures and spat them back at us in the form of poems that provoke us to recognize in them the darker, weirder parts of ourselves." Mark Bibbins, author of They Don't Kill You Because They're Hungry, They Kill You Because They're Full "I know this is a bad way to speak," announces Annie Christain in her extraordinary debut collection Tall As You Are Tall Between Them, "but I'm doing it on purpose." Assimilating the marginalized speech patterns of cult members, non-native speakers, abuse survivors, and the countless everyday victims of modernity, Christain forges a wildly inclusive lyric voice-one that can "pull out the sword from the inside" of collective life. "Truth be told, there are actual horses, and then there are the destroyers who sometimes inhabit the horses." This poet is one of the destroyers." Srikanth Reddy, author of Facts for Visitors Where many reporters shock and numb their audiences with a relentless stream of violence and insanity while skipping or inadequately addressing inconvenient questions, Christain starts with these questions, zooms in, hovers, and rewinds. The bizarre, disturbing, and uncomfortable scenarios presented in her poems are written with an earnestness that possesses just the right degree of plausibility to leave the reader asking time and time again, "What if?" At first glance, Tall As You Are Tall Between Them is otherworldly sci-fi horror. In the end, the book is too familiar. In fact, it is our very own-the underbelly and in-between of a shifting and sliding world where much meaning is found through context and brain chemistry. All the while, Christain teaches us to peel back the layers, to be fearless -"to jump towards the atom blast if [we're] going to be forced to fall back anyway," and to enjoy the ride.



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