



# Failure Lyric

*Kristina Marie Darling*

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## **Failure Lyric** Kristina Marie Darling

In *Failure Lyric*, Kristina Marie Darling captures, with an accuracy few have managed before her, the panicked numbness one feels at the end of a marriage. It is a book in which nothing moves and nobody changes, and yet the poems move together, and yet the people in the poems are changed by the movement of the poems—that is to say, although *Failure Lyric* tells the story of the end of a marriage, it tells that story not from the perspective of the people involved, but from the perspective of time itself, neither embodied nor personified, but just as it is, pushing and pulling on the people caught in the end of the marriage like the wake of a boat. This way of telling is Darling's own, and it is miraculous. —Shane McCrae, author of *Forgiveness Forgiveness* "At the time the glass case was built, the specimen wasn't quite dead." Working the same way memory works, the way dreams work, the poems of *Failure Lyric* spiral around the death of a relationship like a pack of detectives. Shattered bottles, the envelope full of winter, the birds burying their dead, the wedding dress too heavy or worn by another, the burning orchids: each has its message. Kristina Marie Darling gives us a narrative in images both surreal and everyday that recur and accrete to evoke a sense of deep and irrevocable loss. It's impossible to read without feeling similarly moved. —Janet Holmes, author of *Humanophone* Kristina Marie Darling's *Failure Lyric* begins and ends with erasures, but what remains is nothing short of captivating. Beginnings and endings are bound up in each other as the collection centers around a relationship that seems doomed from the start. Each line branches like an ice crystal into gorgeous imagery that mines the territory between life and death: gardens frozen in full bloom, birds buried in snow, a beloved haunted by the past. This hybrid collection of "failures" catalogs grief by fracturing the world – not to destroy it, but to let in light and make it beautiful. —Kelly Magee, author of *Body Language*

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