

## **Fissures: One Hundred 100-Word Stories**

by Grant Faulkner (Press 53, 2015)

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### Reviewed by Emily Haymans

One hundred stories, one hundred words each—100 X 100 is how Grant Faulkner lays down the grid for his collection of ultra-brief stories, *Fissures*. The book is a literary Rubik's Cube: bold chunks of prose bound together by a common core of themes. You can move the pieces around in your mind if you like and rearrange them, or you can appreciate the shape in all its maddening, stunning complexity as is—a mixed-up mosaic of sad lives, broken love, and the glimpses of beauty that we all crave in this drab world.

Celeste and Gerard, two recurring characters, are less star-crossed lovers than scientific subjects bound together in the same strange maze. They cannot separate from each other and yet can never seem to touch, at least not in the way that they yearn for. Other names and images appear and disappear throughout the collection: empty wine bottles, the color pink, a girl named Maeve, delicious-sounding words—Faulkner has given us a book as much poetry as much as it is fiction, and imagery so sharp you can almost feel its corners jutting off the page.

The collection is complex, raw, and hard to untangle, but the reader of this collection doesn't mind. The brevity of each story is tantalizing. The stories read as breaths, as whispers, as reflections in glass. "None of us can explain the joy of falling," ends "Floating," an ethereal tale of huffing glue and jumping into a pool. Faulkner is right; we can't help but be drawn in, and down, into this same shimmering maze.

Emily Haymans recently finished her MFA in Creative Writing at New Mexico State University, where she served as Managing Editor for *Puerto del Sol*. Her work has appeared online in *Monkeybicycle*. In 2013, she was a finalist for the Kathy Fish Fellowship sponsored by *Smokelong Quarterly*. She is currently pursuing another Master's degree in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. She hopes that her fiction and nonfiction will soon appear in a literary journal near you.