



# Fuego

*Leslie Contreras Schwartz*

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## **Fuego** Leslie Contreras Schwartz

From the bed of the hospital, to the classroom of fourth-grade refugees, or the icy waters being swum by a long-distance swimmer, *Fuego* is a book that explores the extraordinary in the ordinary, the body as a surreal form of existence. At the core of the book is the theme of survival and the awe at being able to survive, and the glory of being ordinary and alive. In this debut poetry collection, *Fuego* explores the failure and blessing of childhood, the surrealism of birth and motherhood, and the estrangement of the body from itself and others.

## **Praise for FUEGO**

"Leslie Contreras Schwartz doesn't use words to smooth over life's edges. Instead, she writes about the jagged parts directly: the struggle of difficult pregnancies, the trials and joys of motherhood, the horrors she saw in her students' lives when she briefly taught fourth grade. (This is) a collection of clear, crisp poems that tangle directly with the stuff of life."

--Houston Chronicle

*Fuego* is full of fire, of the passionate intensity of creation in the face of great odds - the intensity of difficult pregnancies and childbirth and all-consuming motherhood, of the immigrant student who struggles to write his first sentences in English, the child who falls from her bike and gets up again and again, the long-distance swimmer trying to swim to Antarctica, all of them stand-ins, I think, for the artist who struggles to make something meaningful from language in the midst of life, which is to say in the midst of death. This Leslie Contreras Schwartz has done in her debut collection, and hers is a distinctive and welcome new voice in American poetry.

~ Susan Wood, Gladys Louise Fox Professor Emerita of English at Rice University, author of *Asunder*, National Poetry Series selection 2001

Leslie Contreras Schwartz's *Fuego* is filled with the power of *things*, floods that bring both destructive power and promise of new life, televisions that bring awful news, a small child's naming of clouds. Like Plath's most tender poems, Schwartz's debut collection uses the minutiae of everyday living to create a world where even in the darkest times, light finds a way to come "from under / the shade, / light from under / the door. "

~ Amanda Auchter, author of *The Wishing Tomb*, winner of 2013 PEN Center USA Literary Award for Poetry

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