



Stories that explore the tragicomic aspects of romantic love

Portraits of a Few of the People I've Made Cry

Stories

Christine Sneed

Winner of the Grace Paley Prize in Short Fiction

"If this story collection crackles with the energy of youth, it also feels written by a cool-eyed soul reincarnated at least three times. . . . By turns funny and pitiless, these tales amount to a vision. The book's voice is unforced in its ready wit, detached compassion. There is an admirable candor. Each character's sexuality seems the natural outcome of a life fully risked."

—Allan Gurganus, contest judge and author of *The Practical Heart* and *Oldest Living Confederate Widow Tells All*

"I can't recall the last time I tore through a story collection with such unbridled gratitude. Christine Sneed is fearless. She sends her heroines zooming toward the disasters foretold in their own soft hearts, but she does so without histrionics. She's brutally honest and equally tender about the manners in which women find themselves entrapped. To call her a rightful heir to Grace Paley and Lorrie Moore is accurate but insufficient. *Portraits of a Few of the People I've Made Cry* is a stone-cold miracle, and Christine Sneed is my new hero."

—Steve Almond, author of *My Life in Heavy Metal* and *The Evil B.B. Chow*

The ten stories in this striking debut collection examine the perils of love and what it means to live during an era when people will offer themselves, almost unthinkingly, to strangers. Risks and repercussions are never fully weighed. People leap and almost always land on rocky ground. May–December romances flourish in these stories, as do self-doubt and, in many cases, serious regret. Mysterious, dangerous benefactors, dead and living artists, movie stars and college professors, plagiarists, and distinguished foreign novelists are among the many different characters. No one is blameless, but villains are difficult to single out—everyone seemingly bears responsibility for his or her desires and for the outcome of difficult choices so often made hopefully and naively.

CHRISTINE SNEED teaches creative writing and literature courses at DePaul University. A graduate of the MFA creative writing program at Indiana University, she has published stories in *Best American Short Stories 2008*, *New England Review*, *Massachusetts Review*, and many other journals.

Fiction

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