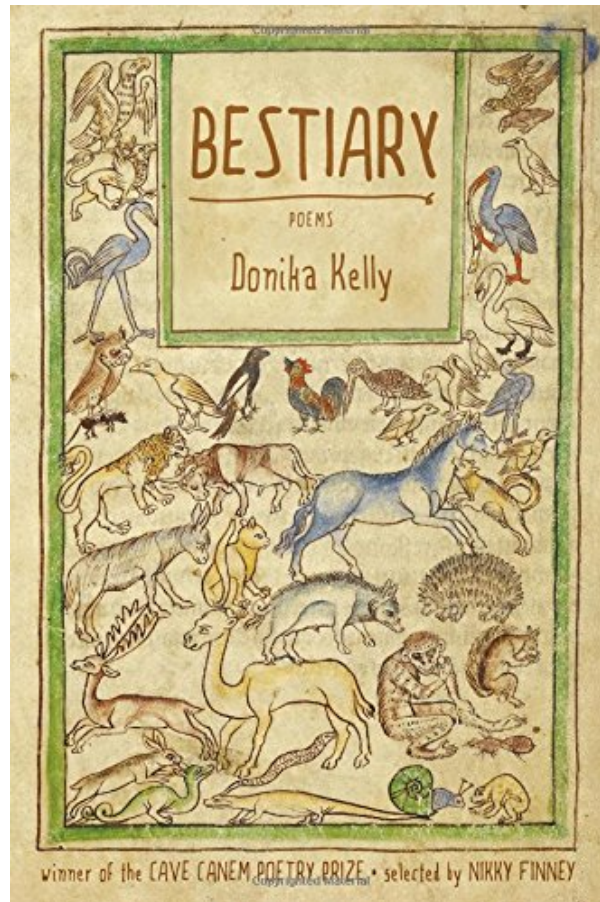
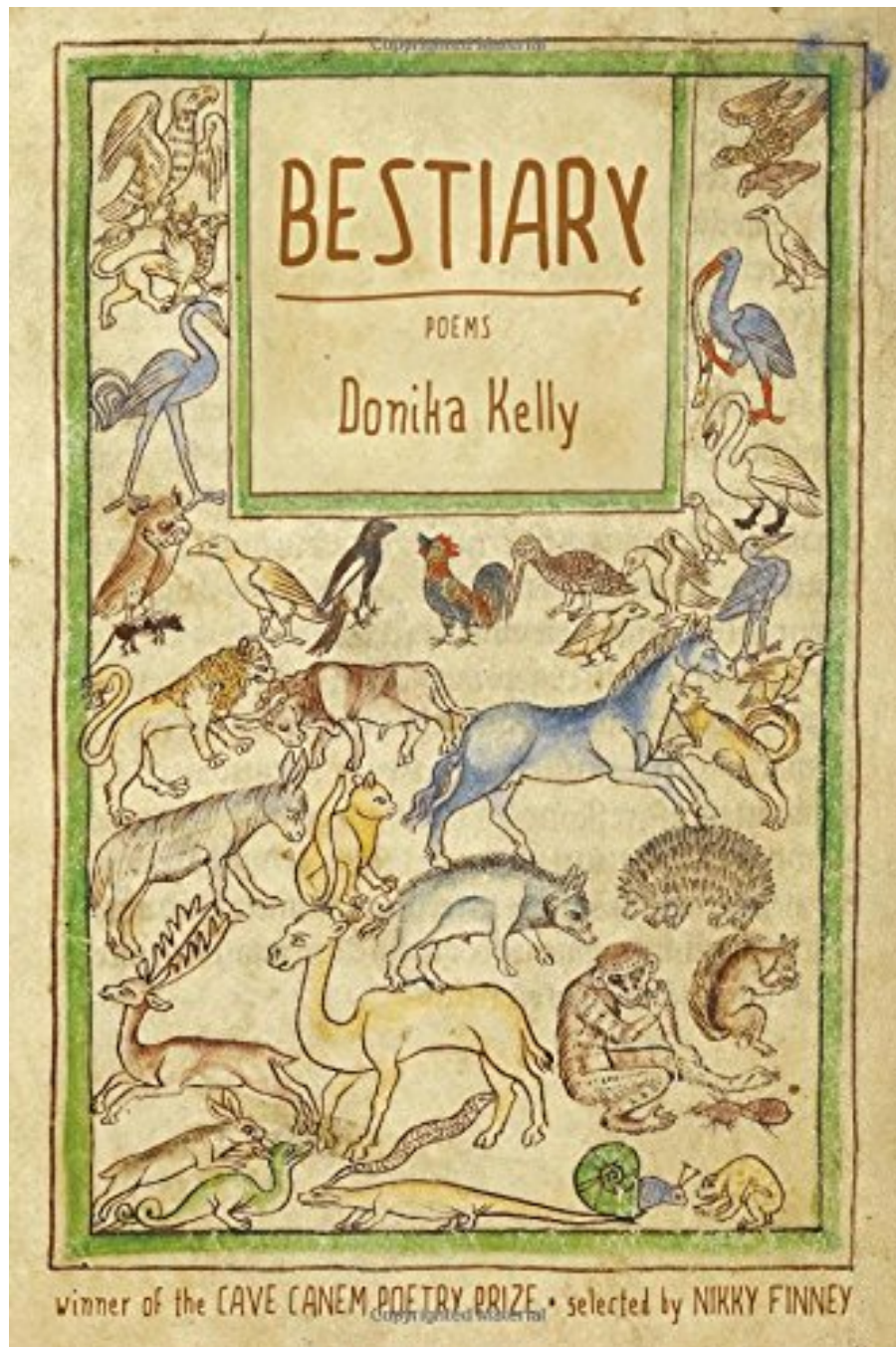


BESTIARY: POEMS BY DONIKA KELLY



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Review

“Striking. . . . Kelly is a descendant of Sylvia Plath by way of the wintry Louise Glück ? her poems are animated by roiling, mostly dark emotion, but they’re spare, composed and often quite short. . . . The fantastical creatures in *Bestiary* are almost all hybrids? mermaids, minotaurs, griffins ? as opposed to mere monsters, and their in-betweenness calls attention equally to the danger of dissolution and the possibility of unity. Kelly is drawn to both outcomes, and her uncertainty gives her writing its peculiar magnetism.”?The New York Times Book Review

“[An] astounding debut. . . . The poems employ language that sinks its teeth in at vulnerable moments. . . . Kelly’s creatures howl and whimper as she imparts emotional truths.”?Publishers Weekly, starred review

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“The poems in Kelly’s *Bestiary* are incredibly precise, tight without feeling constrained, with a looseness that almost defies such a density and precision.”?Rob McLennan’s Blog

“*Bestiary* is an act of transformation. . . . But it is a true act, also, because it acknowledges that a human will hide to be seen, and look back. These poems?among the best being written by any young poet in America?look back.”?Shane McCrae

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About the Author

Donika Kelly is a poet and a scholar, and is currently a lecturer in the Gender, Sexuality, and Women's

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BESTIARY: POEMS BY DONIKA KELLY PDF

Donika Kelly's fierce debut collection, longlisted for the 2016 National Book Award and winner of the 2015 Cave Canem Poetry Prize

I thought myself lion and serpent. Thought
myself body enough for two, for we.
Found comfort in never being lonely.

What burst from my back, from my bones, what lived
along the ridge from crown to crown, from mane
to forked tongue beneath the skin. What clamor

we made in the birthing. What hiss and rumble
at the splitting, at the horns and beard,
at the glottal bleat. What bridges our back.

What strong neck, what bright eye. What menagerie
are we. What we've made of ourselves.

--from "Love Poem: Chimera"

Across this remarkable first book are encounters with animals, legendary beasts, and mythological monsters--half human and half something else. Donika Kelly's *Bestiary* is a catalogue of creatures--from the whale and ostrich to the pegasus and chimera to the centaur and griffin. Among them too are poems of love, self-discovery, and travel, from "Out West" to "Back East." Lurking in the middle of this powerful and multifaceted collection is a wrenching sequence that wonders just who or what is the real monster inside this life of survival and reflection. Selected and with an introduction by the National Book Award winner Nikky Finney, *Bestiary* questions what makes us human, what makes us whole.

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Features

- Graywolf Press

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