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Rose Metal Press

an independent publisher of hybrid genres

announces the publication of

EVIDENCE OF V

A NOVEL IN FRAGMENTS, FACTS, AND FICTIONS

BY SHEILA O'CONNOR

In an ambitious blend of fact and fiction, including family secrets, documents from the era, and a thin, fragmentary case file unsealed by the court, novelist Sheila O'Connor tells the riveting story of V, a talented fifteen-year-old singer in 1930s Minneapolis who aspires to be a star. Drawing on the little-known American practice of incarcerating adolescent girls for "immorality" in the first half of the twentieth century, O'Connor follows young V from her early work as a nightclub entertainer to her subsequent six-year state school sentence for an unplanned pregnancy. As V struggles to survive within a system only nominally committed to rescue and reform, she endures injustices that will change the course of her life and the lives of her descendants. Inspired by O'Connor's research on her unknown maternal grandmother and the long-term effects of intergenerational trauma, *Evidence of V: A Novel in Fragments, Facts, and Fictions* is a poignant excavation of familial and national history that remains disturbingly relevant—a harrowing story of exploitation and erasure, and the infinite ways in which girls, past and present, are punished for crimes they didn't commit. O'Connor's collage novel offers an engaging balance between illuminating a shameful and hidden chapter of American history and captivating the reader with the vivid and unforgettable character of V.

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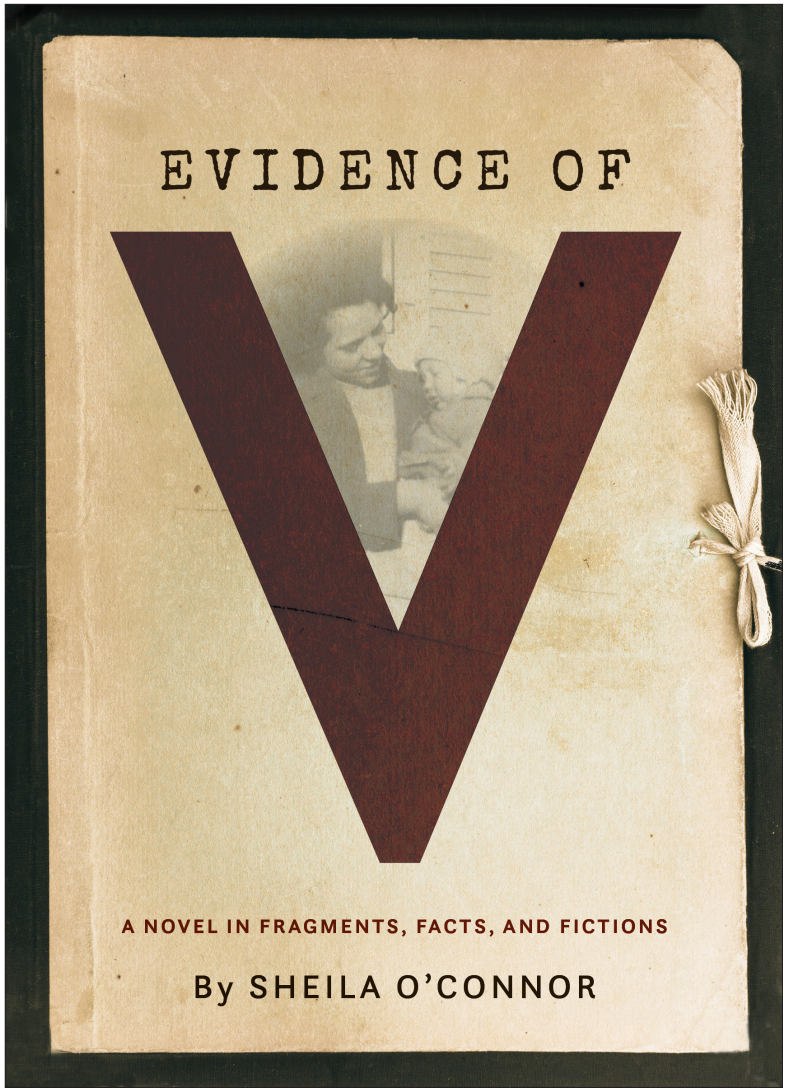
OCTOBER 2019
Print ISBN 978-1-941628-19-5
E-book ISBN 978-1-941628-20-1
Paperback, 280 pgs.
Fiction
$16.95



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ADVANCE PRAISE FOR
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"Evidence of V is unlike anything I have ever read. Exhilarating, heart-breaking, and haunting, the experience of V's life and times scintillates and sears long afterward. Part mystery novel, poem cycle, police report, ethnographic study, noir screenplay, historical account, existential spreadsheet, medical report, legal history, hometown newspaper article, meta-feminist account, writer's diary, literary collage, psychological assessment, family memoir, social criticism, and several other forms that are uncategorizable, by the end, the reader realizes, through Sheila O'Connor's masterful artistry, that at the heart of the 'lie' of this fiction, lurk deeper truths—that our ancestors and their traumas can never fully be known to us and each of our family histories is a complicated mix of truth and lore and absence."

—Ed Bok Lee, author of *Mitochondrial Night*

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"With grace and aplomb, Sheila O'Connor's *Evidence of V: A Novel in Fragments, Facts, and Fictions* shines a bright literary light on a dark page of American history. To every 'tuff' girl, to every girl who ran wild or got in trouble, to every girl who had to make her own way or raise herself, and to every adult who ever knew such a girl, O'Connor's new novel is for you. O'Connor tells the story of her grandmother V, institutionalized for her sexuality. When our power is too great, when shaming doesn't work, when they don't know what else to do, they lock us up. V is our grandmother, our auntie, our long-ago sister, and defiant best friend. V is us."

—Maureen Gibbon, author of *Paris Red*

"Written in compelling, creative, and near poetic prose, O'Connor vividly introduces the reader to V—a promising 15-year-old singer in 1930s Minnesota, sentenced to a reformatory for sexual delinquency. O'Connor uses a mix of fiction with historical case file information to illustrate the myriad ways such facilities exploited, misunderstood, silenced, and traumatized young women who were deemed insolent, damaged, and mendacious. Kin to *Girl, Interrupted, Evidence of V* gives a keen sense of how we have punished (and continue to punish) girls for non-criminal violations, often in a misguided effort to 'rescue and save.'"

—Lisa Pasko, author of *The Female Offender: Girls, Women, and Crime*

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About the Author

Sheila O'Connor is a multi-genre writer whose books include novels for adults and young people. Her work has been honored with the Michigan Prize for Literary Fiction, Minnesota Book Award, International Reading Award, and Midwest Booksellers Award among others, and has been included in Best Books of the Year by *Booklist, VOYA, Book Page,* and Chicago Public Library, as well as selected as a Barnes and Noble Discover Great New Writers' title. O'Connor received her MFA in Poetry from the University of Iowa Writers' Workshop, and her work across genres has been recognized with the Loft Literary Center's McKnight Fellowship, two Bush Artist Fellowships, and several Artist Initiative grants from the Minnesota State Arts Board. She is a professor in the Creative Writing Programs at Hamline University in St. Paul, Minnesota, where she serves as fiction editor for *Water~Stone Review.*

About the Press

Founded in January 2006 by Abigail Beckel and Kathleen Rooney, Rose Metal Press is an independent publisher of literary works in hybrid genres. Recent books include the acclaimed art and text collaborations *Monster Portraits* by Del and Sofia Samatar and *Ghostographs* by Maria Romasco Moore; the collage biography *The Bitter Life of Božena Nemcová* by Kelcey Parker Ervick; the fragmentary lyric essay *The Voyager Record* by Anthony Michael Morena; *Family Resemblance: An Anthology and Exploration of 8 Hybrid Literary Genres* edited by Marcela Sulak and Jacqueline Kolosov; *My Very End of the Universe,* an anthology and study of novellas-in-flash; and the award-winning craft guide series: *The Rose Metal Press Field Guide to Writing Flash Nonfiction* edited by Dinty W. Moore, *The Rose Metal Press Field Guide to Writing Flash Fiction* edited by Tara L. Masih, and *The Rose Metal Press Field Guide to Prose Poetry* edited by Gary McDowell and F. Daniel Rzicznek.

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