

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**Award-winning poet Natalie D-Napoleon comes of age through her girlhood experiences as an immigrant daughter in rural Western Australia.**

In *First Blood* (Ginninderra Press), 2018 Bruce Dawe National Poetry Prize winner, Natalie D-Napoleon, presents a collection of work that challenges our perceptions of girlhood. Despite playing the role of muse throughout the ages, the selfhood of girls has somehow remained elusive.

Her body was not hers, a stitch/of animal, a pinch of dirt, a girl/is made of words plus liquid minus time ...
D-Napoleon writes in her award-winning poem, "First Blood: A Sestina."

Raised on a farm on the outskirts of Perth by Croatian-immigrant parents, D-Napoleon has stitched together collection of poems-as-memoir into a fabric of poems created and found, exploring the pre-adolescent girlhood experience within a culture of immigrant dislocation. Using both formal and experimental poetic techniques, D-Napoleon breaks down the hierarchy of modern poetic forms, something poet and academic, Lucy Dougan, found revealing ...

"This poet is in possession of a distinctive voice and they have really struck on a subject matter that engages both them and the reader."

The fractured and gendered world of the D-Napoleon's rural Western Australian childhood poignantly comes to the fore in poems such as "Your Mother Says it Was the Books", "Short Skirts", and "Bhreus." Lucy Dougan describes the later as a fiery call for girls to be seen ...

"With its inventive and painfully embodied strands of imagery around sexual development this poem is a true war cry."

Likewise, Western Australia's preeminent pastoral and experimental poet, John Kinsella, has high praise for D-Napoleon's award-winning title poem.

"First Blood: A Sestina" is an unsettling poem. In it, the body is constantly reconfigured in the ironic light of its own formal creation — a critique of self and society in terms of the female body, a strong undoing of form working hand-in-hand with the application of that form, the sestina."

In *First Blood*, D-Napoleon unlearns herself along with the stories of girls, forgotten and unseen, through exploring the dreams countless generations have sown into the land to examine how this legacy impacts upon the mythic creation and destruction of girlhood. This is the compelling collection that Australia needs to read - a "war cry" and re-invention of the pastoral by an enticing new voice in Australian poetry.

***First Blood* will be released on August 27th, 2019 by Ginninderra Press Ginninderra Press, an award-winning small publisher whose roster includes collections by Windham-Campbell Award Winner Ali Cobby Eckermann.**

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