

## Lungs Full of Noise (Iowa Short Fiction Award)

Tessa Mellas



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This prize-winning debut of twelve stories explores a femininity that is magical, raw, and grotesque. Aghast at the failings of their bodies, this cast of misfit women and girls sets out to remedy the misdirection of their lives in bold and reckless ways.

Figure skaters screw skate blades into the bones of their feet to master elusive jumps. A divorcee steals the severed arm of her ex to reclaim the fragments of a dissolved marriage. Following the advice of a fashion magazine, teenaged girls binge on grapes to dye their skin purple and attract prom dates. And a college freshman wages war on her roommate from Jupiter, who has inadvertently seduced all the boys in their dorm with her exotic hermaphroditic anatomy.

But it isn't just the characters who are in crisis. In *Lungs Full of Noise*, personal disasters mirror the dissolution of the natural world. Written in lyrical prose with imagination and humor, Tessa Mellas's collection is an aviary of feathered stories that are rich, emotive, and imbued with the strength to suspend strange new worlds on delicate wings.

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