UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENT

Florida International University
University Graduate School

Master in Fine Arts Thesis Defense

Abstract

A Group of Hyenas is a Cackle

by

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A GROUP OF HYENAS IS A CACKLE is a memoir about sisterhood, success, and self-worth. The memoir spans approximately twenty-five years in the memoir-speaker’s life and is divided into five sections. Book one explores her childhood through high school graduation, focusing on her experiences as the eldest sister in a hardscrabble, Irish-Catholic family living in New England during the 1990s and its central defining event—the death of her mother from a drug overdose. Book two examines a slice of adulthood in the protagonist’s twenties when she was a law student living in New York City with her sister. The remaining three sections work like a ribbon that weaves throughout the narrative via a prologue, a middle passage, and an epilogue in which the memoir-speaker incorporates women’s gymnastics and explores the concepts of sacrifice, truth, and success to illuminate and unify the major themes of this protagonist’s journey.

Much of the memoir is written in the first person, although several sections explore other points of view. Past tense is used throughout, but certain sections are written in present tense to heighten suspense and emotional urgency. A GROUP OF HYENAS IS A CACKLE is written in the bildungsroman tradition, and like recent memoirs such as Ordinary Girls by Jaquira Diaz and Long Live the Tribe of Fatherless Girls by T Kira Madden, the protagonist’s coming of age is explored beyond the passage into legal adulthood using both prospective and retrospective storytelling techniques.

Date: March 17, 2022
Time: 1:00 p.m.
Place: Biscayne Bay Campus, AC1 317

Department: Creative Writing
Major Professor: Julie Wade