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PROPOSAL FOR CREATIVE THESIS

THE GOSPEL OF INHERITANCE

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THE GOSPEL OF INHERITANCE is a poetry collection that delves into the mysteries of inheritance, examining what we pass on to others, intentionally or not, and what we receive, welcome or not. The book is organized into four sections or "books," borrowing from the language of the Bible.

In the opening section, Book of Memory, the speaker sifts through layers of recollections to uncover the origins of inherited ideas, traits and instincts, effecting an archeological approach to genealogy. Poems in this section—utilizing lists, glossaries, and nontraditional forms—are influenced by the work of Maureen Seaton, Van Jordan, and Nick Carbo. The second section, Bible of This Body, deals with the ways the body manifests memories and secrets through illness, senses, and responses. Informed by the work of Lisa Glatt and Raphael Campo, the poems take the reader on a tour of injuries, "landmarks" on the speaker's physical form. Section three, Slow Exodus, is a 15-page prose poem about the speaker caring for her mother—suffering from Alzheimer's—while battling her own illness, Multiple Sclerosis. Utilizing both dialogue and flashbacks, this piece draws from the work of Michael Hettich and Jim Daniels, both of whom spin stories about family, teasing out details of the past and relating them to the vivid present. The last section, Psalms & Revelation, the most lyrical in the book, is about making conscious choices and changes. As the speaker embraces brighter and healthier relationships, she is able to disregard toxic legacies, which allows her to establish and celebrate intimacy, to craft a new notion of home and the means by which we inherit.

These poems are reminiscent of the sensual language, energy and rhapsodizing found in Barbara Hamby's *Alphabet of Desire*.

THE GOSPEL OF INHERITANCE is ultimately about how family is defined and redefined—focusing on the speaker's realization that legacy is not destiny—that she has the power to choose what she keeps from her heritage and how she will make use of those "gifts."