

Spanning four books across a six year period, Darling's selected delivers a natural cohesion, a sense of the single, complex gesture, sharply whittled from these formerly separate visions. In the opening poem, Darling writes, "when she falls in love/ physical pain does not simply resist language but ac- / tively destroys it," posing a thesis statement for the poems' skeletal, clawing elegance. At the center of this book is a failed engagement, a sudden abandonment, tinged with violence, which serves as Darling's flood subject, and expressed most often through erasures and extended narratives centered on playwriting and theatrical performance. Specifically, Shakespeare's Ophelia appears as a wire running through the poems, serving as a totem for the speaker's despair and aesthetic concerns. Those who have followed Darling's astonishing artistic output will be delighted to possess this selection of her strongest and most current work.

—**Allison Benis White**

The remarkably prolific Kristina Marie Darling presents selected poems covering only 6 years, but many styles. Intensely literary, and visually beautiful as well, these poems in the form of footnotes, erasures, lyric essays, and meditations on other texts, show the full array of her interests and literary powers. She has the ability to create haunting and intimate physical spaces with her language and her visual arrangements. Reading these poems, you will feel like you are in a carefully curated environment—like those foreign films you saw as a teen that made you, when you emerged into the bright light of your boring life, want to take a train to a rainy European city and fall in love with the wrong person.

—**Matthew Rohrer**

DAYLIGHT HAS  
ALREADY COME

SELECTED POEMS  
2014–2020

Kristina Marie Darling



*from* **FORTRESS**

this book has only

circles, for

when we enter into

pain  
begins to tell

it finds a voice, it

about the

larger structures of

events  
happening

within the interior of that person's body

an invisible geography  
that, however

portentous, has no reality .

Or , it may seem as distant as the

violent events of unknown nature that occur from time  
to time.”

when one speaks about “one’s own physical pain” and about  
“another person’s physical pain,” one might appear to be

heroic,

while for the person outside the body, what is

easy

is

its unsharability, its  
resistance to language.

when she falls in love

physical  
pain does not simply resist language but actively destroys it

## BOOK ONE

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I'd watch from the window as he cared for the sprawling fields that surrounded us. For years they had been overrun with dead poppies. In every direction, those dark flowers still in bloom.

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Another night. The same lifeless corsage. I wondered if the landscape, rather than affection for one another, had been the source of our enduring euphoria.



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When we met, he said the flowers were for me. I saw them desiccated in summer, then iced over, covered in snow. I stopped wondering when they would bloom.

### MINOR PLOT (I)

He hired a woman to look after the garden. Not the dead poppies, but another garden on a separate piece of land. They planted seeds in neat little rows. Days passed. When she gaped at the enormous primroses, he began tearing them from the ground.

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It was no longer about marriage. The dead flowers and their opium dust had become a test of will. I could already feel the most startling numbness in every fingertip. That was when I began to pray. I woke thinking of Persephone, her lips hovering before tiny pomegranate seeds.

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To enter the underworld, must I have left this one behind? I can no longer remember what my face looked like or the warmth of his hand through my dress.

## MINOR PLOT (II)

The event loses significance when history turns *away from*, becomes the sound of a harp playing delicate music as she walks toward the burned meadow.

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I could not endure the boxed geraniums beneath every window, their long stems like dried insects under glass. It was then I began to examine the iron gates and coaxed the locks with such care, as though they were hothouse flowers or small children.

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I brought with me three possessions: a photograph, a set of keys, and the silver ring on my finger. The diamonds had already been torn from their little nuptial bed. I remember only the way they glistened, like his very white teeth, or a dead butterfly mounted in a frame.

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When I look inside my leather wallet, a tiny calendar is turned to April. Why has the season died all around us? I can't recall what a strawberry tastes like or the weight of that silk dress on my shoulders.