

# APOSTASIES

by Holli Carrell

*Holli Carrell's debut collection Apostasies explores Mormon girlhood, the American West, matriarchal lineage, indoctrination, estrangement, and the lingering ramifications of being raised within a repressive and patriarchal American religious ideology. Interweaving prose, documentary poems, translations, erasures, and spare, imagistic lyrics, Apostasies aims to recover and reclaim the body by its own definition. Casting her experience within the broader narrative of Mormonism, Carrell unpacks the fraught history of gender and polygamy in nineteenth-century Mormonism, exposing the sexual predation and grooming tactics used by Joseph Smith—Mormonism's founder—on his thirty-three "wives," many of whom were fourteen to eighteen years old at the time of their marriage. Courageous and defiant, the poems in Apostasies ultimately celebrate doubt and disobedience; they challenge oppressive constructions of womanhood and cisnormativity, in particular rejecting motherhood, "obedience," and religious traditions that vilify independent thought and bodily autonomy.*



Holli Carrell was born and raised in Salt Lake City, Utah and now lives in the Midwest, where she recently completed her PhD in Creative Writing with a Graduate Certificate in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at the University of Cincinnati. A 2024-2025 Taft Research Center Dissertation Fellow, her poetry has appeared or is forthcoming in *Gulf Coast*, *The North American Review*, *32 Poems*, *Poetry Northwest*, *Ninth Letter*, *The Journal*, *Bennington Review*, and *Salt Hill*, among other journals.



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September 15, 2025 / 142 pages / \$20 USD  
(Presale price \$18 @ Perugia until 9/15/25)

ISBN-13: 978-0-9978076-9-1

available through Perugia ([perugiapress.org](http://perugiapress.org))

and Asterism ([asterismbooks.com](http://asterismbooks.com))

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*"Apostasies boldly interrogates a life under righteous surveillance, under siege by holiness and flockness, and what religious control cultivates in the interior. Carrell's intimate and experiential poems deconstruct the 'myth and figment' of the 'American story' of the LDS Church with both a scalpel and an axe—this book is a reckoning." - Felicia Zamora, author of Interstitial Archaeology*