

# Alex Cuff

## *Common Amnesias*

Alex Cuff's first full-length collection, *Common Amnesias*, moves through the dissolution of adolescent selfhood in the midst of capitalist excess and nuclear family norms, via the territory of dreams, and fallibilities of memory that tether the individual to the common amnesias of our institutions. Weaving through familial chasms, humiliation, and inheritance, the book interrogates the violence a subject endures when daring to disrupt the family bond for a new way of relating to community.

// *Common Amnesias* is thrilling. A dizzying marathon through the taboo, the shamed, the disgusting. Cuff takes us far beyond shock value to deep intimacy. Rather than make a parade of shame, her poems seek to protect & value “the girl stored in tupperware / My call to keep her alive.” As she falls backwards, never landing, she grasps for a railing: What to make of my inheritances—personal, familial, medical, cultural, racial? As she repeatedly fails to secure a railing, we overhear her urgency; not just to survive this life, but to properly care for it. Her speaker, like a “woman [who] plants tulips in her yard with a pick ax,” is simultaneously tender & voracious, troubled & troubling. *Common Amnesias* gripped me, challenged me, & provoked my stitching to come undone. I simply have never read anyone like Cuff.

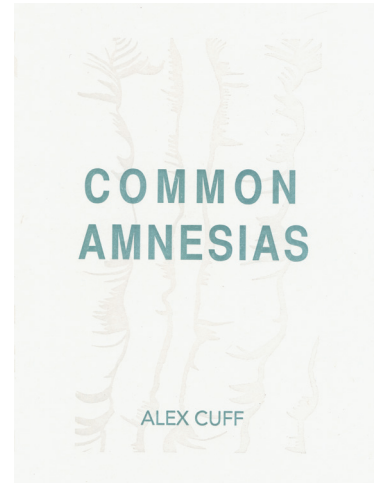
—SHIRA ERLICHMAN

// *Common Amnesias* is quest through the underworld meets game night. This book points to behaviors that can't be called love or nature, the operations of the body, and what goes unsaid in families. Alex Cuff questions bravery. Thinking of “all the hamsters who have died without reason” and how “the land grab continues”, she assembles things irrelevant enough to be poetry: “spuds”, “cigarette money”, “electrical tape,” and a “bathrobe.” And then she declares war.

—JOSHUA ESCOBAR



**Alex Cuff** is an educator, writer, and editor living in Brooklyn, New York. Her chapbooks include *I Try Out A Sentence to See Whether I Believe* (Ghost Proposal) and *Family, A Natural Wonder* (Reality Beach). Writing has been published in *Apogee Journal*, *The Los Angeles Review of Books*, *The Brooklyn Rail*, *Teachers and Writers Magazine*, *Poetry Project Newsletter*, *6X6*, and elsewhere. Cuff is a co-founding editor of the Brooklyn-based poetry journal *No, Dear*, a public high school teacher at the Academy for Young Writers, and a graduate of the Milton Avery Graduate School of Arts at Bard College.



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