

# Introducing *Dirty Laundry* by Deborah Alma



## About Deborah's Poetry:

Deborah Alma's debut poetry collection is raucous, daring and honest, drawing contemporary women's lives and those of our foremothers into the spotlight. It voices bold, feminist songs of praise: of persistence, survival, adventures of sexual rediscovery. A perfect remedy for the heartsick and weary, Alma's intimate poems are resolute enchantments, a form of robust magic.

The collection brims with poems which are unafraid of airing secrets, desires and untold stories. From growing up mixed-race and learning to survive as a woman in the world, to tales of the countryside and themes of escape and finding joy, this book of poems is as vivid as it is frank and fearless.

"Here is a debut collection that will sweep you away in its generous, welcoming arms: poetry that bears witness to the twin faces of pain and pleasure... this collection will ambush you with sudden and surprising epiphanies gleaned from a life well lived: immersive, thrilling and redemptive." -

**Jacqueline Saphra**

"Haunted by violence, yet refusing to be silent, rooted in the body as a way of experiencing the world and unafraid in their sensuality, these are poems that examine women's lives in all their complexity, woven through with imagery that lingers in the mind and the heart long after you finish reading." - **Kim Moore**

Deborah Alma is also the Emergency Poet, travelling to provide poetry prescriptions in her vintage ambulance, she now runs The Poetry Pharmacy in Bishops Castle, Shropshire. She edited *The Emergency Poet: an anti-stress poetry anthology* and was the editor of the landmark #MeToo poetry anthology, published by Fair Acre Press. Her first poetry pamphlet *True Tales of the Countryside* was published by The Emma Press.

Discover this striking three minute film introducing the collection and a reading of 'Roshan' by Deborah Alma: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KfHJ\\_oQvJpw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KfHJ_oQvJpw)

Listen to this wonderful podcast interview with Deborah about the healing impact of poetry, prescribing poems and setting up the Poetry Pharmacy <https://reddoormagazine.com/podcast/>

**Key poems to read:**

Flock

Borderline

Roshan

Sill Life

The Dog Knows its Mistress

Dissociation

The Angel in the House

Playing Scrabble with my new lover

The Magic Spell

**Discussion points:**

- Which poems did you find the most memorable on first reading, and why?
- What do you think is the one key theme of the book?
- What kind of language does the poet use, and what kind of effect does it have on the reader or listener?
- How does the title of the book, *Dirty Laundry*, make you reflect on the poems inside?
- Would you recommend this book, and would you share it with someone who maybe hasn't read or enjoyed a poetry book before? If so, which poem would you choose to share with them to convince them they might enjoy it?

**Suggested activities for reading groups:**

- Split off into groups of two, and find a space in order to take time to read each other a poem from the book. Discuss why you choose your poem, and share your reaction to the poem your partner chooses.
- Read one of the longer poems from this book in the round – reading a line each and going around the group.
- Choose a favourite word, line or stanza (verse) each, and share it with the group.