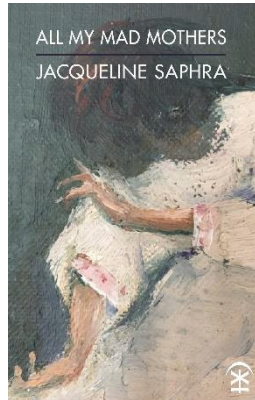


Introducing

All My Mad Mothers by Jacqueline Saphra



About Jacqueline's Poetry:

Jacqueline Saphra's *All My Mad Mothers* explores love, sex and family relationships in vivacious, lush poems that span the decades and generations. At the heart of this collection is the portrait of a mother as multitudes – as a magician with a bathroom of beauty tricks, as necromancer, as glamorous fire-starter, trapped in ever-decreasing circles and, above all else, almost impossible to grasp.

These astute poems step assuredly from childhood's first exposures to the scratched records and unsuitable lovers of young womanhood, the slammed doors of daughters and sons, the tears and salted soups of friendships, and the charms of late love. Jacqueline calls this collection her "unreliable memoir".

All My Mad Mothers was shortlisted for the T S Eliot Prize.

Dad, Remember You Are Dead, a sister collection, was published by Nine Arches in September 2019.

"In these poems, Saphra offers her readers a dazzling cornucopia of the postures of narcissism, sad comedies of lust, guilt and self-annihilation, excruciating bohemian domesticity and the harsh realities of female destiny and aspiration, sacrificed on the altars of love, sex and art. Wonderful portraits emerge." – **Annie Freud**

"Saphra's sharp little fragments of narrative get under the skin. Though they have the vivid detail of autobiography, this clinging, sometimes stinging quality suggests that these could be many women's, maybe any woman's, stories and not just the author's own."

- **Philip Gross**

Read this insightful blog post where Jacqueline shares some of the stories behind the book, explores its key themes and discusses her choice of title:

<https://ninearchespress.blogspot.com/2018/01/in-conversation-jacqueline-saphra.html>

Hear Jacqueline read some poems at the T S Eliot event, Southbank Centre, introduced by Ian McMillan: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cUsmvk5tnnw>

Jacqueline talks briefly about her writing https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_sO6wQTZ9jY

Key poems to read:

All My Mad Mothers

Hampstead, 1979

The World's Houses

The Doors to My Daughter's House

Spunk (after Jacob Epstein's sculpture of Adam)

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, *All My Mad Mothers*, 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.