

WILD THINGS by JAIMEE WRISTON COLBERT

(October 15, 2016, BkMk Press)

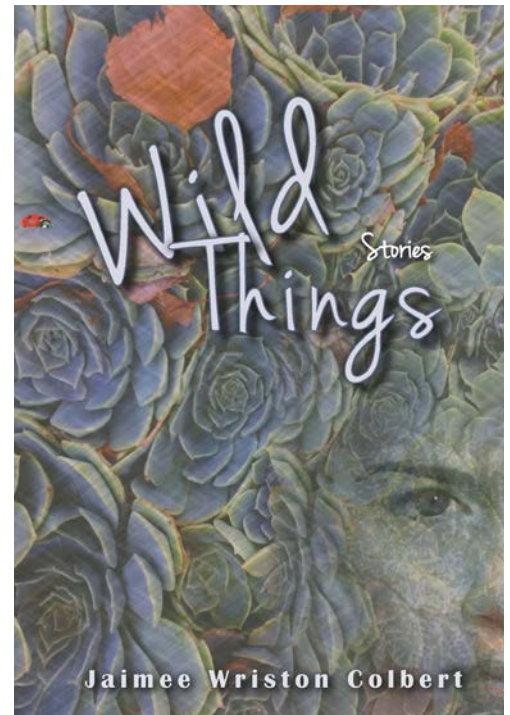
“These linked, rural noir stories ... defy gravity and take flight.”

—**Bonnie Jo Campbell**, *Mothers, Tell Your Daughters* and National Book Award finalist for *American Salvage*

Jaimee Wriston Colbert has given us a story collection for our times. In *Wild Things*, Colbert's human characters face displacement, just like the tropical alligator who appears in New York's Susquehanna River. They face sheer desperation, like that of an Ohia tree clinging to solid lava on a Hawaiian volcano. In an environment where good-paying factory jobs are an endangered species, Colbert's protagonists confront such post-industrial predations as meth, homelessness, the abduction of a young girl by a man with the heart and soul of a "wild thing," and the ghosts of lost dreams. Their survival is their triumph.

HHe can sense her disapproval, that sour-jawed, tight-lipped way she had of looking at him when he wasn't the man she thought he'd be, is how his mother used to put it. Even when he wasn't a man, just a boy, she'd say it that way, shaking her head, sour-jawed, tight-lipped: You're not the man I thought you'd be. Though this wasn't often, as mostly Jones behaved on instinct and his instincts were usually good. Like with this girl. She is so good that every time he passes her, shuffling from the trailer's little living room to its even littler kitchen—she's hunched over on the mattress, her head between her knees, he wants to lay his hand atop her head, that long tangled hair of hers, maybe stroke it a little, work the kinks out, his fingers inching through them like parting morning glory vines. Jones doesn't want to scare her, but he does feel something irrevocable here. He can't return her; she's not a purchase with a warranty. Admittedly he hadn't thought it out this far but, he reminds himself, he's protecting her. That boy was going to make her do things. The world is like that, forcing you to do or be who you don't want to become. Always in a state of becoming. With Jones she can just be.”

—**Jaimee Wriston Colbert**, *Wild Things*



Wild Things will be published October 15, 2016, ISBN 978-1-943491-05-6, \$15.95 trade paper, 220 pp. Genre: Fiction. BkMk titles are available from Baker & Taylor, SPD in Berkeley, California, and from the press directly. www.umkc.edu/bkmc

Jaimee Wriston Colbert is the author of four previous books: *Shark Girls*, Finalist, for the USA Book News Best Books 2010 and ForeWord Magazine Book of the Year; *Dream Lives of Butterflies*, Independent Publisher gold medal award winner; *Climbing the God Tree*, winner of the Willa Cather Fiction Prize, and *Sex, Salvation, and the Automobile*, winner of the Zephyr Prize. Her stories have appeared in such journals as *TriQuarterly*, *New Letters*, *Gettysburg Review*, and *Prairie Schooner*. Originally from Hawai'i, she is Professor of Creative Writing at SUNY, Binghamton University. www.jaimeewristoncolbert.com



Photo Credit: Marisa Wriston

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PRAISE FOR *WILD THINGS* (BkMk Press, 10/15/16) BY JAIMEE WRISTON COLBERT

Brace yourself for Jaimee Wriston Colbert's *Wild Things*. These linked rural noir stories unfold their wings near the Susquehanna River in a landscape graced by wildlife and haunted by lost property, "business after business failing, padlocking their doors, factories with their boarded up windows, just another has-been town slowly shutting down." Those left behind must navigate the meth labs and broken families and their own oversized yearning. "Abstinence may lead you to god," says one of Colbert's women, "but it's hunger that'll get you fed." These characters sing their hunger and dance their hard-won wisdom. These brilliant, surprising stories defy gravity and take flight.

—**Bonnie Jo Campbell**, *Mothers, Tell Your Daughters, Once Upon A River*,
and National Book Award finalist for *American Salvage*

Jaimee Wriston Colbert is a storyteller of the first order, and *Wild Things* is immensely rewarding. A must read for short story lovers, the voice not only captivatingly original, but downright addictive. I did not want the collection to end, and for days afterward I could still hear that pitch-perfect blend of lyric and narrative whispering in my ear. Without question this is her finest book so far!

—**Jack Driscoll**, *The World of A Few Minutes Ago*

A tremendous new collection from a writer with extraordinary powers of observation and an empathetic understanding of the thorny, heartbreaking human condition. There's so much reverence for the world in *Wild Things*, so much intelligence and beauty on every page. A stunning book.

—**Christine Sneed**, *Little Known Facts* and *The Virginity of Famous Men*

Jaimee Wriston Colbert has written a book of deeply affecting elegies to the scattered remnants of wilderness, the some few wild things we still live among: blackbird, brown trout, reef shark, teenage girl. By turns luminous and razor-sharp, in landscapes as diverse as a shimmering beach in Oahu and a crumbling mill town in upstate New York, these characters find comfort, not only in the "peace of wild things" but also in their scrap and bite, their tenacious urge toward survival in an absurdly hostile world.

—**Pam Houston**, *Contents May Have Shifted* and *Cowboys Are My Weakness*

PRAISE FOR *SHARK GIRLS*, a novel:

"Colbert has created an edgy and lush gothic tale laced with outlaw eroticism and barbed absurdities, and propelled by a powerful undertow racing beneath every alarming scene, bitterly funny moment, and strange twist of fate. From women battered and haunted to "throwaway kids," rock-and-roll burnouts, and quixotic quests, Colbert summons a world as volatile as Hawaii itself, with its cycles of volcanic destruction and slow repair."

—**Donna Seaman**, *BOOKLIST* (Starred Review)

"Colbert's *Shark Girls* is a mesmerizing novel, vibrant with eroticism, myth, and mystery.

—**Madison Smartt Bell**, author, *All Souls' Rising*

PRAISE FOR *CLIMBING THE GOD TREE*, a novel in stories:

"The scope of Jaimee Wriston Colbert's storytelling is impressive, with no fewer than 16 central characters delineated in intricately overlapping narratives... The stories stand on their own as sensitive and unsentimental evocations of unrelieved loss."

—*The New York Times Book Review*