



A Body, Undone: Living On After Great Pain (Sexual Cultures)

Christina Crosby

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In the early evening on October 1, 2003, Christina Crosby was three miles into a seventeen mile bicycle ride, intent on reaching her goal of 1,000 miles for the riding season. She was a respected senior professor of English who had celebrated her fiftieth birthday a month before. As she crested a hill, she caught a branch in the spokes of her bicycle, which instantly pitched her to the pavement. Her chin took the full force of the blow, and her head snapped back. In that instant, she was paralyzed.

In *A Body, Undone*, Crosby puts into words a broken body that seems beyond the reach of language and understanding. She writes about a body shot through with neurological pain, disoriented in time and space, incapacitated by paralysis and deadened sensation. To address this foreign body, she calls upon the readerly pleasures of narrative, critical feminist and queer thinking, and the concentrated language of lyric poetry. Working with these resources, she recalls her 1950s tomboy ways in small-town, rural Pennsylvania, and records growing into the 1970s through radical feminism and the affirmations of gay liberation.

Deeply unsentimental, Crosby communicates in unflinching prose the experience of "diving into the wreck" of her body to acknowledge grief, and loss, but also to recognize the beauty, fragility, and dependencies of all human bodies. A memoir that is a meditation on disability, metaphor, gender, sex, and love, *A Body, Undone* is a compelling account of living on, as Crosby rebuilds her body and fashions a life through writing, memory, and desire.

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Sergio Espinoza:

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