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# Fishtailing

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~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

3

This young adult novel in the form of poetry conveys the intensity of adolescent emotions of love, loss and disaffection. The poems of four Canadian high school students, some produced for school work, placed alongside the comments and e-mails of their English teacher and their school counsellor, gradually reveal not only the students' emotional wounds, their hopes and schemes, but also a game of personal manipulation that will end in tragedy. Two of these students, Carl and Tricia, are going through the more mundane forms of teenage turmoil; wondering who they are and how to make their parents understand them. The other two have more disturbing experiences to come to terms with. Immigrant Miguel has seen his parents massacred in a Central American war; and Natalie is the victim of parental neglect and sexual abuse. It is self-harming Natalie who is the catalyst of the tragedy, seeking to cause the kind of chaos to others that she has suffered in her own life. This is a compelling and generally convincing novel, even if, accepting the fiction of four equally competent teenage poets, it is understandably difficult not to hear the voice of the book's author in the poems rather than the voices of her characters. A Canadian publication, this was a Governor General's Literary Award winner there. It is also one of the poetry selections for the White Ravens 2012.

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