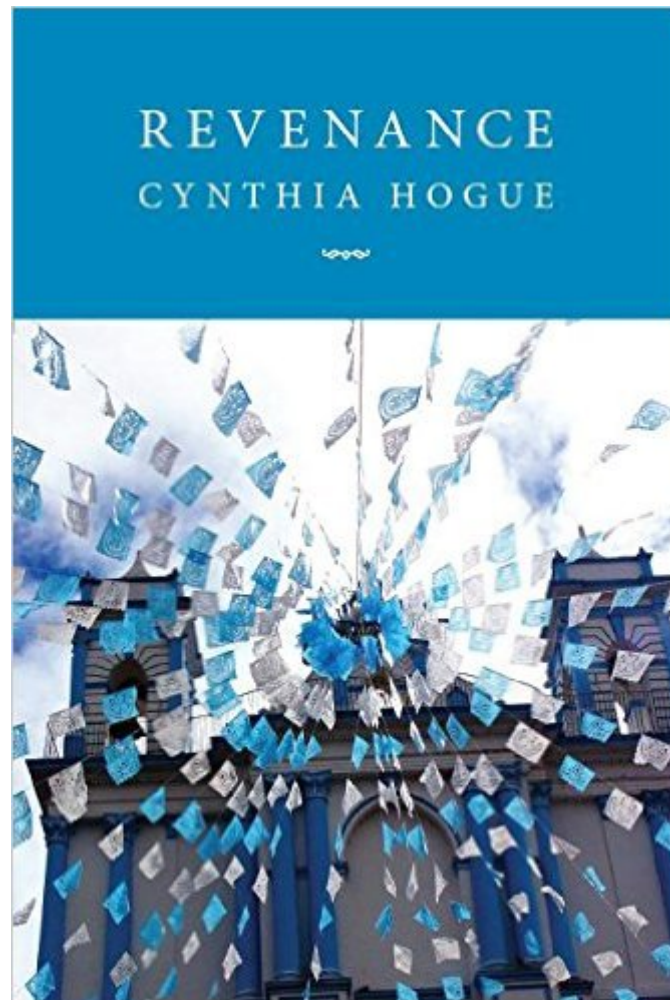


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# Revenance



## Synopsis

By turns elegiac, ecopoetic, and impolitic, Cynthia Hogue's eighth collection, *Revenance*, is a condensery of empathic encounters with others and otherness. Hogue coins a word "from revenant, French for "ghost" to consider questions of life and afterlife, and to characterize the ways in which the people and places we love return to us, and return us to ourselves, holding us to account. The poems of *Revenance* contain telling touchstone figures, like a guide named Blake who, noting signs of global warming, will speak of spirits but not angels; a man who dies and is brought back to life by the imaginative power of love; and a woman who can speak the language of endangered trees. While writing these poems, Hogue journeyed often across country to her familial roots in upstate New York in order to help care for her dying father. At last she began to record some of the many stories she heard of mysterious encounters and visitations, such as she herself was soon to witness, over several intensive years. Although grief silvers the threads of these poems, Hogue pares away the personal in order to be present to others in a fiercely engaged and innovative poetry.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Elegant, intense, mysterious and lucid at the same time, her eighth book is a leap forward for Hogue--and a leap upward, inward, sideways, downward. "Revenance" implies "return," and this book is full of ghosts, spirits, voices, encountered in the sharply-lit shadow spaces of the life of the poet, and others. There are also parents, paintings, friends, a suite of poems recounting the history

of a creek, words that "register flickering realities out of love/ of freedom. They do this out of love/ without which we are useless." Elegiac? Yes, this book is filled with elegies, but it goes beyond elegy to wonder, and even to happiness.

Revenance is a deeply introspective work, creating a meditative space for the reader to appreciate the deeper currents of Cynthia Hogue's thoughts. Her page-work is delicate and indicative of circularity, the pace of thought, the form of our passage through her inventions. The use of repeated words and sounds create ripples within the field. These modulations are subtle, her control, masterful. The moments of large movement, even slight cacophony becomes very apparent. The effect of this on myself as a reader is a slowing down of my eye movement across the page, and opening of mindfulness that lets the subtle ghost passage into my reverie. This is serious stuff. One finds themselves hyper aware of one's own breath as they read, the world slows down. We feel like words in wind. What we sense is a deeper form of absence, I wouldn't say negative capacity, moreso, deep drought longing. These shadows become solid objects, a whole landscape of solid wind, the outline of the tree more real than the actual tree. This linking of the idea of perceived forms having solidity, having mass, is in some way transferred to the rhetorical drive across Hogue's lines. These moments are as if the displayed abstract becomes objectile, as if the idea itself were a form of energized construct: a new form of synesthesia in which what is felt by the mind has a tactile presence within the field. The reader that is summoned to this by the book by Hogue's call for: "the concentration it takes // for water to become/like ice."

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