

★ Honeymoons in Temporary Locations

Ashley Shelby

University of Minnesota Press (Jun 25, 2024)

Hardcover \$22.95 (160pp)

978-1-5179-1707-4

The threat of climate change looms over the short stories of Ashley Shelby's *Honeymoons in Temporary Locations*, resulting in a zesty mix of humor, speculative science fiction, and melancholia.

Set in a future wracked by environmental decay, "Muri" is a far-out ecofable in which polar bears being relocated to the South Pole rebel against the human crew of their transport vessel; visceral violence gives way to tragedy. And "Honeymoons in Temporary Locations" is intricate, set in a climate-compromised future wherein the rich relocate to inland safe zones while the poor fend for themselves. Its grim commentary on inequality and bureaucracy is elevated by an ever-shifting romance between two women whose erratic relationship mirrors the changes affecting the world.

More playful and satirical are the book's "recovered documents," which illustrate the "new normal" of a changed planet. Millionaires coping with "domestic downsizing" are invited to join a support group; a podcast, "Climate Crime Files," investigates the killing of an ash tree with forensic fervor; and sunny cruise brochures trumpet submerged areas, including Boston and Savannah, as adventure destinations. Elsewhere, a questionnaire for "climate-impacted" migrants judges their suitability for housing and carbon credits.

The latter half of the book is a gritty look at "solastalgia," a condition of rage, depression, and catatonia resulting from the climate crisis. Marketing plans for a drug that treats solastalgia brainstorm how to best gloss over its psychotic side-effects, while individual case studies serve as heartbreaking vignettes about patients who strain to reconnect with the damaged environment by communicating with trees and wildlife, even as they flirt with insanity or amputate their own limbs in acts of twisted atonement for what was done to Earth.

Tongue-in-cheek, mournful, and inventive, *Honeymoons in Temporary Locations* is a bracing collection of cautionary tales regarding the too-probable near future.

HO LIN (July / August 2024)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. No fee was paid by the publisher for this review. Foreword Reviews only recommends books that we love. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.