



## No Credit River

**Zoe Whittall**

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In Zoe Whittall's prose poetry memoir *No Credit River*, heartbreak seeps through the cracks of everyday experiences.

Covering a period of close to ten years, this hybrid memoir details the time prior to, during, and after a transformative romantic relationship in Whittall's life. Its autofictional narrative works to elucidate these queer experiences in short, slice-of-life prose poems. Whittall discusses her younger years in lesbian communities, her years-long relationship with a trans man, and her experiences with pregnancy, miscarriage, and isolation during COVID-19.

Their lines at once punchy and lyrical, the poems render the lived reality of heartache palpable as they explore how the past and present intertwine to color mundane experiences in. The poems are intense and personal, but they also traverse broad territory as they question how to talk about relationships that fall outside of the structures of heteronormativity.

Whittall shares both joyous and sorrowful memories of her time with her boyfriend and describes their domestic life in which she also became a stepmother to his two children. In later poems set after their breakup, she investigates her own identity as a bisexual femme woman, including as it relates to the experience of pregnancy and motherhood. She also touches on the unconventional nature of making a living as a writer, describing attending conventions, residencies, and retreats and interacting, often uncomfortably, with other authors. Throughout, the book engages the autofictional mode to traverse large swathes of time, using poetic devices such as refrain and motif to emphasize the cyclical and repetitive nature of heartbreak.

In intimate vignettes that weave back and forth through time, the memoir *No Credit River* covers the aftermath of a life-altering breakup, addressing themes of queer relationality and sexuality, aging, pregnancy, and loss with intelligence, wit, and devastating candor.

BELLA MOSES (November / December 2024)

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