



Beauty Is Convulsive

Carole Maso

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) ➔

Beauty Is Convulsive

Carole Maso

Beauty Is Convulsive Carole Maso

Beauty Is Convulsive is a biographical meditation on one of the twentieth century's most compelling and famous artists, Frida Kahlo (1907-1954). At the age of nineteen, Kahlo's life was transformed when the bus in which she was riding was hit by a trolley car. Pierced by a steel handrail and broken in many places, she entered a long period of convalescence during which she began to paint self-portraits. In 1928, at twenty-one, she joined the Communist Party and came to know Diego Rivera. The forty-one-year-old Rivera, Mexico's most famous painter, was impressed by the force of Kahlo's personality and by the authenticity of her art, and the two soon married. Though they were devoted to each other, intermittent affairs on both sides, Frida's grief over her inability to bear a child, and her frequent illnesses made the marriage tumultuous. This prose poem is typical Maso -- vigorous, daring, always original. She brings together parts of Kahlo's biography, her letters, medical documents, and her diaries with language that is often as erotic and colorful as Kahlo's paintings.

Beauty Is Convulsive Details

Date : Published October 12th 2002 by Counterpoint

ISBN : 9781582430898

Author : Carole Maso

Format : Hardcover 192 pages

Genre : Poetry, Biography, Nonfiction, Art, Glbt, Queer, Feminism

 [Download Beauty Is Convulsive ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Beauty Is Convulsive ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Beauty Is Convulsive Carole Maso

From Reader Review Beauty Is Convulsive for online ebook

Diann Blakely says

Kate Braverman's poetic dynamism in THE INCANTATION OF FRIDA K. makes Carole Maso's self-defined "prose poem" appear sadly wanting in terms of style. There's little genuine transformation of subject matter, as Maso herself seems to recognize when she concedes that her book is "utterly reliant" on Herrera's work—not to mention the fact that she quotes sizable hunks of THE DIARY OF FRIDA KAHLO.

(originally published in the NASHVILLE SCENE / Village Voice Media)

Katharine Holden says

Hated it. Vapid, self-indulgent. Found repellent author's insistence on bring erotic imagery into author's little girl years.

Cherie says

Wonderful. Great reflections on the life of Frida, her passion with Diego, her failed pregnancy attempts, her miscarriages, her pain, her suicide.

Marie says

This book made me cry on an airplane.

Selena says

she reminds me of Jeanette Winterson. This reminds me of *Written on the Body*. It has such wonderful flow and she jumps so flawlessly between herself, Frida and Diego. Oh how I loved this book.

It was just what I needed.

Fluffy Singler says

Whenever I read Carole Maso, I start writing like her. And so it's the words and impressions that linger, hovering above the page, insistent, repeating: Broken. Fragment. Meditation. Accident. Votive.

Composed in Maso's unique poetic and fragmentary style, *Beauty is Convulsive: The Passion of Frida Kahlo* is many different things at once: a highly condensed biography of Kahlo's life, a voice for her words, and Maso's artistic "conversation" with Kahlo.

Beauty is Convulsive samples freely from biographies of Kahlo among Maso's own writing and impressions. We've become used to this style from filmmakers and rap artists, but it is still unusual in books, where we're accustomed to more singularity of voice, clear quotes and citations with footnotes and page numbers. Maso's rendering of Frida Kahlo requires a certain suspension of disbelief, a willingness to experience Kahlo's life as we abandon our usual literary constraints.

The book focuses on three defining elements of Frida Kahlo's life. The first is a serious bus accident in her adolescence which had repercussions throughout her entire life, including chronic pain in her back, legs and feet, and an inability to have children. Her subsequent miscarriages make up another recurring theme. And the third is her marriage to fellow painter Diego Rivera.

Maso's sometimes halting, disjointed writing style suggests a life lived in fits and starts, as in *Votive: Child*:

"Its birth certificate filled out in elegant scroll
His mother was
Frieda [sic] Kahlo

take this sorrow: child

I would give you fistfuls of color
if only
alegria

I would have given you.

Because I wanted you come to me

the cupped butterfly, painted black." (19)

One of the hallmarks of Carole Maso's writing is repetition of words and phrases, and *Votive* features in the title, as well as in the text, of many of the pieces in this book. *Votive: Vision*, *Votive: Courage*, and *Votive: Sorrow*, are among the pieces that lead the reader on a meditation, a wish, a prayer on elements of Frida Kahlo's life, almost as if you are walking the stations of the cross. In between the *Votives* and other pieces are short epigrammatic quotes from Frida herself, each entitled "Accident", which serve as interludes:

"I am not sick. I am broken.

But I am happy as long as I can paint.” (65)

“Nevertheless I have the will to do many things
and I have never felt “disappointed by life”
as in Russian novels. (75)

In her choice and placement of text from her journals, Maso not only gives voice to Frida Kahlo, but also highlights Kahlo the poet, particularly when writing about Diego:

“From you to my hands I go all over your body, and I am with you a minute and I am with you a moment, and my blood is the miracle that travels in the veins of the air from my heart to yours. . . Diego, nothing is comparable to your hands and nothing is equal to the gold-green of your eyes. . . .”(34-35)

Lest you start to believe that Maso is merely a collage artist, arranging the words that Frida has written and what others have written about her, Maso intertwines her own meditations on the artist’s life and her work:

“She remembers when her mouth -- pressed to the ear -- to the
hum of the paint the blood:
don’t kiss anyone else
magenta, dark green, yellow
And she watches him.” (91)

Add to this quotes from others who knew Frida Kahlo, including Diego himself, Alejandro, who was involved in the accident with Frida, and notes from her doctors, and gradually, contemplatively, you get a picture of the woman and the artist, and the effect she has on those who wish to enter her world.

(Originally published in Rain Taxi Review of Books, 2003)

John Madera says

Carole Maso's a marvelous collagist, and *Beauty Is Convulsive* finds her fusing Frida Kahlo's imagery and language with her own lyrical fragments, all of which coheres into a fluid, visceral whole. Representative passage: "Once again desire has made a ruin of us. A pile of loamy soil—a dome; or concave—a grave. And sweet pain is a tablet in your hand dissolving, a host beneath your tongue. A sugary skull. A rose. Where does your life go?"

Jason says

Quite possibly one of the worst books I've read. Too much information is assumed to be held by the reader.

Thing Two says

I must admit I'm not very familiar with Frida Kahlo's work, have never read anything about her, and am only vaguely aware of who she was and what she represented. With that background - or lack of one - I found this

poetry difficult to follow. I'm sure it would mean more to someone who is already a fan.

Lisha Adela says

This book has layers of meaning for those that know the intimate details of Kahlo's life. My family, originally from Mexico City, knew her so I was able to verify some details. For example, she talks about the baby in the jar. My mother recalled the actual remains of her baby in a jar on the mantle when she was there for a party. But for those that didn't know her life with Diego, "the biggest liar I have ever known," according to my grandmother, this book seems like a never ending cadence of blood, pain, and disfigurement. The writing is much like the author declares at the end, a communion between the diaries, the bibliographical details and her own psyche. Several of the poems are repetitive in their themes and at some point one loses track of time so it all blurs. Frida was all about her love of beauty. Her life was also orchestrated by the moments, no zen here.

Jaclyn Michelle says

<http://wineandabook.com/2012/07/30/re...>

"Something strange had happened. Frida was totally nude. The collision had unfastened her clothes. Someone in the bus, probably a house painter, had been carrying a packet of powdered gold. This package broke, and the gold fell all over the bleeding body of Frida. When people saw her they cried, "¡La bailarina, la bailarina!" With the gold on her red, bloody body, they thought she was a dancer." (p.33)

In college, I was three measly credits shy of a double major in Art History, and any lecture that focused on the work of Frida Kahlo was always a highlight. As an artist and as a woman she was vibrant, outspoken, honest, raw and incredibly talented.

Carole Maso's poetic exploration of Kahlo's life did for Frida lyrically what Julie Taymor did for her cinematically. Both were haunting, dreamlike, and pitch-perfect in capturing Kahlo's aesthetic.

Maso drew from Kahlo's own diaries, medical documents, and letters as well as her biography to craft her poetic exploration of/dialogue with Kahlo's life and art. I found Beauty is Convulsive incredibly hard to put down, as Maso managed to really appropriate Kahlo's use of startling, jarring, hallucinatory imagery in her work to create a piece that was moving and visceral.

"Beauty is convulsive or not at all." (p.124)

Rubric rating: 8.5 I am adding Room Lit By Roses and Break Every Rule: Essays on Language, Longing, and Moments of Desire to my epic "to read" list, and I'm adding Beauty is Convulsive to my "must purchase" list.

Andrea says

Carole Maso is an amazing writer who captures the passion of Frida Kahlo so vividly. "I experience Beauty not so much as a book but as a communion." from Author's Note p.170. To be in communion with one's subject or character is what I believe an artist or a writer strives for.

Aimee says

Maybe you have to have some familiarity with Kahlo's work/aesthetic and her biography to fully appreciate this collection, but you don't have to know too many details. Maso herself provides what you need by weaving together Kahlo's journals, biographical accounts, and imagined perspectives. I cannot imagine a more effective use of form for this work. It is fractured, cyclical, meandering, and surprising. What better way to creatively enter the psyche of an artistic genius who battled physical and emotional torment, but was also so full of playfulness, irreverance, and life?

Carol Peters says

Prose poem about Kahlo's life, result, author says, of reading Kahlo's diary. Lovely text, passionate & grim.
