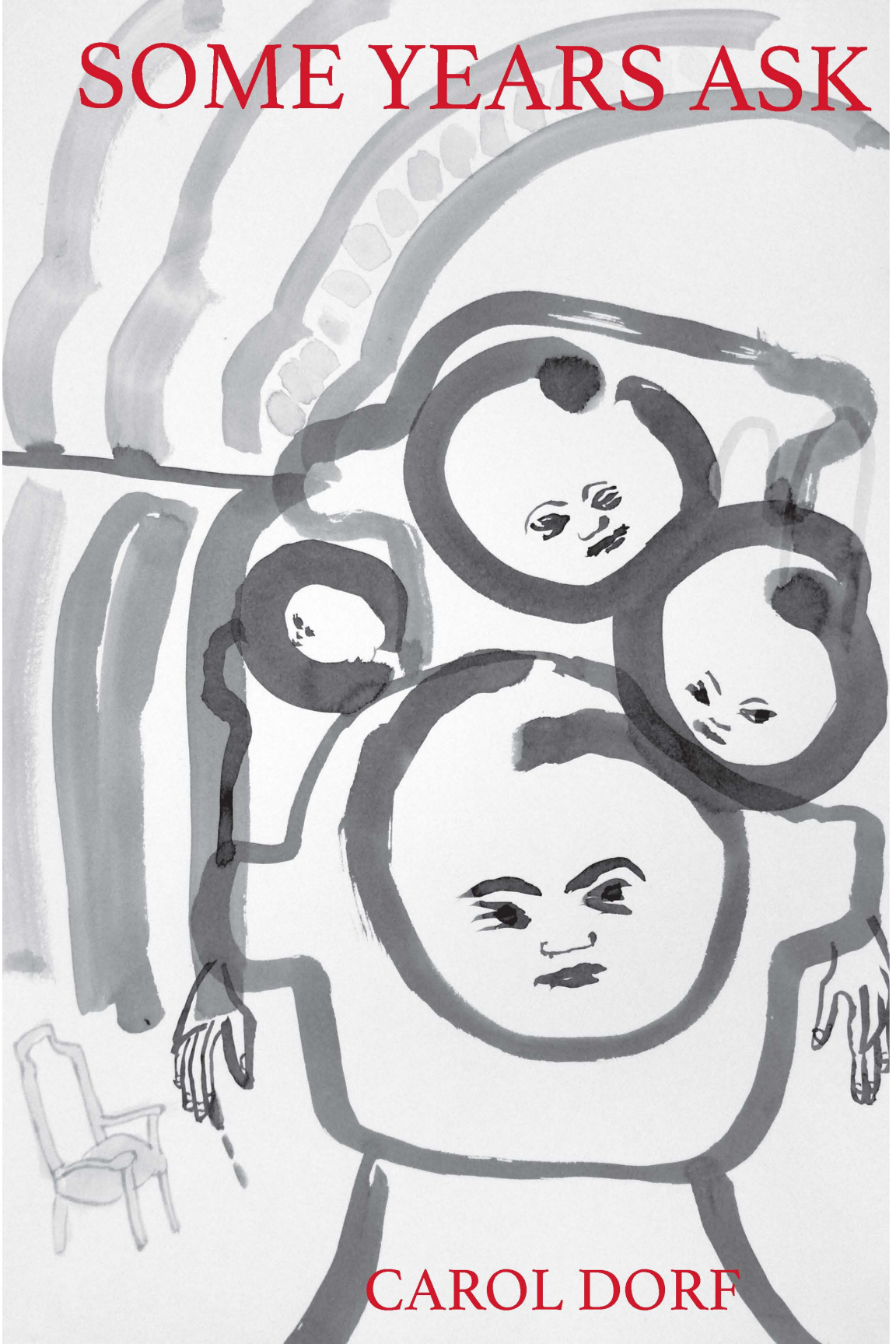


# SOME YEARS ASK



CAROL DORF

# **Some Years Ask**

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**Some years ask, "Which side are you on?"**

You might answer, "I'm on the side of the bees,  
and the waters rising against the coastal shores."

You listen to a debate, and say "I'm ok with reading  
dystopias, but don't believe I live in one,  
and don't want to find myself there."

You say, "I'm on the side of the kindergarten  
children who tumble together on the rug, eager

for stories after eating school lunches portioned  
onto small trays. I'm on the side of Black Lives  
Matter, and the Undocumented. I'm on the side

of the whales who need quiet to hear each other  
calling across the sea. And I'm on the side  
of the fat women, and the crips, and every

contractor who wanted to be paid.

"Which side are you on?" is the refrain.

The future echoes on the screen.

## **With all due diligence**

You perused the sample ballot  
asked Is that proposition

designed to be a poison pill  
or a magic bullet?

At times you were happy  
as you did your best to progress

through the list of questions.  
What is citizenship?

You want to ask an old teacher  
before you take flight.

## **The future**

contradicts

every damn word

you say

you say tomato

I say carpaccio

she says Soylent.

## **In the moment I will investigate**

All those stories  
about the shock of being groped

by strangers on the train  
or the pick up slamming

to a stop driver and passenger  
overflowing with comments

about a body, your body  
that time had turned from child

to girl. Now that this has a hashtag  
you wonder if it means progress.

## **The Sin of Ugly**

The worst of them  
travel the world, shouting,  
"Your Head On A Platter."  
Perseus came to Medusa  
and not the other way round.  
How afraid was he?  
She had no fear until too late.



## **I can't do this, anymore**

A referent  
would be helpful  
don't you think?

Any where  
any more  
any thing?

The landscape  
of your misfiring brain.

A can and a cannot  
walked into a bar.  
No that's the wrong joke.

The fifth grader says  
he wishes he was still  
in kindergarten.

So much this.  
More or any.

Do this just once  
(for me).

## **The future**

passes you cake

along with a brochure

on sugar's lethal nature.

## **Now is the time**

When you hear that line  
it is time to burrow beneath the earth

to dig out a basement. Say you live  
in an apartment go to the nearest

cafe for a double shot of something.  
Or maybe do both – call a friend

and see if they need help digging  
then go together for a drink or three.

The soil around here is like clay  
needs more worms needs compost.

Now is the time to get out  
of Dodge. Travel opens the mind

and other folks' hatred is spoken  
mostly in languages you don't

understand. At a party we Jews  
say, "It's different, we can pass."

*This too will pass* says my mother-in-law  
who has been dead for eighteen years.

You shred papers probably wise  
or wiseass. Now is the time

to go to meetings – to organize  
your way out of this paper bag.

## **The future**

grows cabbages

in window boxes

asks you the time

1938?

For some people

it always was

always will be

cabbage

Sprinkle of salt

## **No one stands in the window**

To be illuminated by the warm light  
of late afternoon. Outside flowers

lie flattened pulled up by their roots.  
If there was a shutter you would close it.

The last thing you want to see is that place  
the last thing you want to imagine

is what they say to each other before  
stepping out. Branches fell in the storm

and leaves filled the sewers. Does one  
November repeat the story of the last?

An old neighbor says *Disruption*.  
*That's the name of the era.*

If you approach the window  
you won't see anything.

**The future**

will not forgive

your hesitancy

demands you notice

the absence of

morning birdsong

tells you

*Do something.*

*Now.*

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