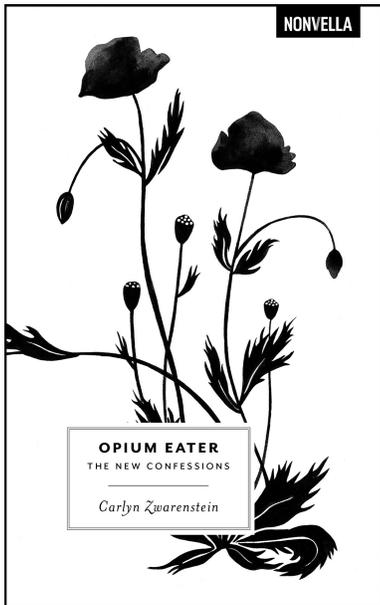


OPIUM EATER

THE NEW CONFESSIONS

"Takes us behind the headlines of overdose deaths to the myriad causes, which call for real political leadership. Urgent reading for an increasingly critical situation."

—The Globe and Mail, December 2016



Opium Eater: The New Confessions
By Carlyn Zwarenstein
ISBN: 978-0-9936216-8-0
5x8" - 95 pages

"At last I take the pill, and I begin to focus intently on the pain in my neck and down my back— waiting for the magic moment when it begins to melt away... there's a pleasant weight on my eyelids, as if I were falling into a dreamless, restorative sleep. At the same time I seem to float, perhaps on a pool raft drifting on saltwater waves, with a sort of inner buoyancy. It is wonderful. I could stay in it forever, like those Victorian gentlemen found after days by worried families— prostrate upon a back-alley opium den couch, obscured in a cloud of stale smoke."

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North Americans are the world's most compulsive and prolific users of legal opioids. Carlyn Zwarenstein, diagnosed with an inflammatory spine disease as a young mother, eventually turned to them to manage her pain.

In this lyrical update of Thomas De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*, she recounts her search for relief and release – with its euphoric ups, hallucinatory lows and desperate pharmacy visits. Along the way she traces the long tradition of opium's influence on culture and imagination, from De Quincey to Frida Kahlo.

A passionate exploration of our relationship to pain and drugs, Zwarenstein's short, powerful memoir offers a compelling entry point to a vital contemporary debate.



A Globe & Mail Top 100 Book For 2016

Zwarenstein achieves that rare thing: a dispassionate account informed by deeply personal experience. Readers will benefit from this measured look at the causes of our increased dependence, which doubles as a critical memoir on the relationship between opioids, creativity, and pain.

— Jade Colbert, The Globe & Mail

Sensuous and compelling... the classic drug memoir follows an arc of bottoming out and finding earthly redemption, of learning how to live without drugs. Provocatively, Opium Eater presents a narrative about learning how to live with drugs.

— Lauren Kirshner, Room Magazine

Takes many illuminating jaunts into the history of opiates, the modern experience of pain, Romanticism, the effect of opiates on creativity, and the fear of teetering on the edge of addiction... can be read alongside such authors as Rebecca Solnit and John Berger.

— Alice Burdick, Lexicon Books

I learned a tremendous amount from this slender little volume, which I teach in my graduate and undergraduate courses. This book is absolutely superb and one of the most thought-provoking additions to the literature of addiction I have read in years.

— Robert Morrison, Queen's University