



The Lost Journals of Sylvia Plath

A Novel

Kimberly Knutsen

“Knutsen writes clear and lovely prose. Her details and descriptions are vivid and surprising. She does an excellent job with setting and is skilled at subtly weaving in details that establish theme. I’m hooked by Knutsen’s prose, images, and metaphors.”

—**Diana Joseph**, author of *I’m Sorry You Feel That Way*

“Consistently funny and well-observed. The detailing and the language are excellent, and the novel is a pleasure to read. It does a brilliant job of exploring how people fall away from a conventional life: some tricky combination of damage, desire, and depression makes these characters both want more and seem unable to get it.”

—**Andy Mozina**, author of *The Women Were Leaving the Men* and *Quality Snacks*

SET IN THE FROZEN wasteland of Midwestern academia, *The Lost Journals of Sylvia Plath* introduces Wilson A. Lavender, father of three, instructor of women’s studies, and self-proclaimed genius who is beginning to think he knows nothing about women. He spends much of his time in his office *not* working on his dissertation, a creative piece titled “The Lost Journals of Sylvia Plath.” A sober alcoholic, he also spends much of his time *not* drinking, until he hooks up with his office mate, Alice Cherry, an undercover stripper who introduces him to “the buffer”—the chemical solution to his woes.

Wilson’s wife, Katie, is an anxious hippie, genuine earth mother, and recent PhD with no plans other than to read *People* magazine, eat chocolate, and seduce her young neighbor—a community college student who has built a bar in his garage. Intelligent and funny, Katie is haunted by a violent childhood. Her husband’s “tormented genius” both exhausts and amuses her.

The Lavenders’ stagnant world is roiled when Katie’s pregnant sister, January, moves in. Obsessed with her lost love, ’80s rocker Stevie Flame, January is on a quest to reconnect with her glittery, big-haired past. A free spirit to the point of using other people’s toothbrushes without asking, she drives Wilson crazy.

Exploring the landscape of family life, troubled relationships, dreams of the future, and nightmares of the past, Knutsen has conjured a literary gem filled with humor and sorrow, Aqua Net and Scooby-Doo, diapers and benzodiazepines—all the detritus and horror and beauty of modern life.

KIMBERLY KNUTSEN is professor of English at Concordia University in Portland, Oregon. A graduate of the Iowa Writers’ Workshop, she holds a PhD in English from Western Michigan University and an MA from New Mexico State University. Her short stories have appeared in *Cimarron Review* and *Hawai’i Review*.



Ordering Information

Call: (800) 621-2736

Fax: (800) 621-8476

email: orders@press.uchicago.edu

UK and Continental Europe

John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

Voice: +44 (0)1243 779777

Fax: +44 (0)1243 820250

E-mail: cs-books@wiley.co.uk



Switchgrass Books

An imprint of NIU Press

ISBN 978-0-87580-725-6 \$18.95 £13.50 €15.70 paper 6 x 9 396 pages