



# Mysteries of Small Houses: Poems (Penguin Poets)

*Alice Notley*

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# Mysteries of Small Houses: Poems (Penguin Poets)

*Alice Notley*

## **Mysteries of Small Houses: Poems (Penguin Poets)** Alice Notley

Alice Notley vividly reconstructs the mysteries, longings, and emotions of her past in this brilliant new collection of poems that charts her growth from young girl to young woman to accomplished artist. In this volume, memories of her childhood in the California desert spring to life through evocative renderings of the American landscape, circa 1950. Likewise, her coming of age as a poet in the turbulent sixties is evoked through the era's angry, creative energy. As she looks backward with the perspective that time and age allows, Notley ably captures the immediacy of youth's passion while offering her own dry-eyed interpretations of the events of a life lived close to the bone. Like the colorful collages she assembles from paper and other found materials, Notley erects structures of image and feeling to house the memories that swirl around her in the present. In their feverish, intelligent renderings of moments both precise and ephemeral, Notley's poems manage to mirror and transcend the times they evoke. Her profound tributes to the stages of her life and to the identities she has assumed—child, youth, lover, poet, wife, mother, friend, and widow—are remarkable for their insight and wisdom, and for the courage of their unblinking gaze.

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