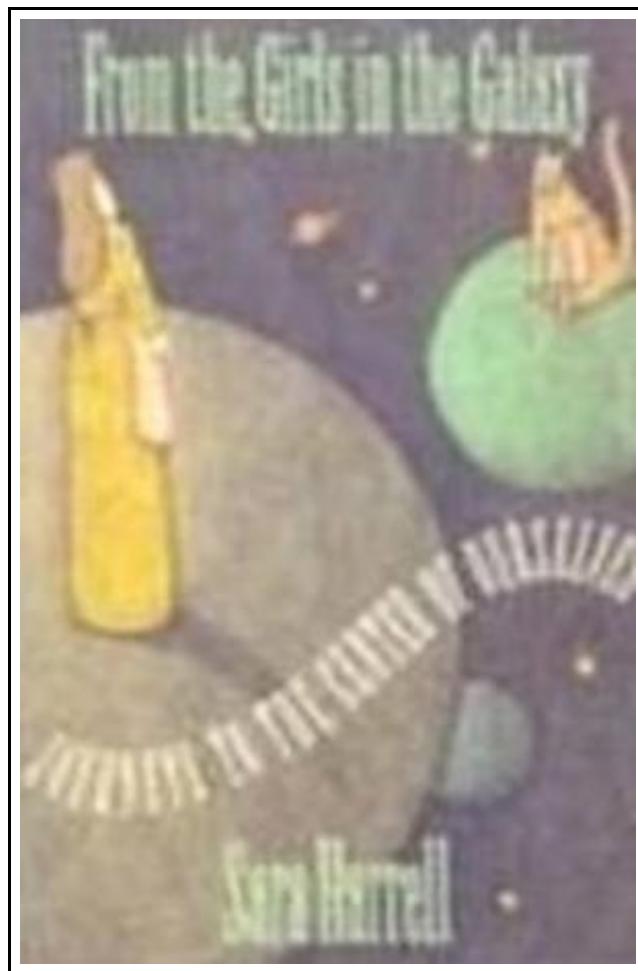


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FROM THE GIRLS IN THE GALAXY: JOURNEYS TO THE CENTER OF OURSELVES

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New Chapter Press, U.S. Paperback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, From the Girls in the Galaxy: Journeys to the Center of Ourselves, Sara Harrell, Sara Harrell's poems take on cosmic concerns in a slangy, self-deprecating manner. The voice in these poems is that of an intelligent, privileged woman pushing forty who pictures herself "unmarried, childless, dogless, politically unemployable/due to certain experimental periods, and not having/significantly saved the world from anything more than/my face without makeup." This is the voice of a woman of conscience who also embraces the marvelous, wild, transforming power of red high heels. In the title poem, Harrell juxtaposes "the click-click of high heels walking away" with South African mothers mourning their slain children, and "that long slab of granite in Washington, D.C." with AIDS babies and elephants killed by poachers. Her touch is so deft she can move smoothly from pressing global issues to the minutia of a day, then back to those heels "stepping quickly, walking down the noises." Tone varies considerably from poem to poem. Harrell does a campy send-up of yuppie jargon, and a "death check" that's filled with anger. She takes us along on a surreal blind date. She imagines a pet snapping turtle whose one rejoinder is "Fucking A." Her humor depends as often on chic shtick as on wit. These poems are not high art, but they are biting and funny. The weakest poems try too hard, though, and stall at the level of clever cuteness, as in "Life with Mom" or "Religious Denomination: Consumer." What's interesting is that her best work in this collection comes when she doesn't keep up the comic fadade. Two of the most powerful poems, "The Good Eyes of May" and "Teaching a Son Kisses," rely instead on compelling, emotionally complex stories, distilled to their essence....

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