

“Labozzetta examines desire, connection, marriage, and ambition in her latest collection of 10 short stories.

These quirky, emotionally fraught, and deeply introspective slice-of-life pieces feature moments of dry wit and subtle, unexpected twists. “Amnesia” tells the story of a man who suffers a head injury and realizes he doesn’t love his fiancée, and in “For the Love of Buffaloes,” a wealth manager suddenly quits his job and becomes singularly preoccupied with producing the perfect mozzarella. Among the standouts is “The Intruder,” about a eccentric older woman who aggressively asks a stranger about her love life and underwear preferences; when the prying woman accuses her, with disgust, of wearing practical, unattractive cotton underwear hiked to her waist, the character indignantly and humorously retorts: “It’s bikini style—on sale.” The most stunning piece, which will linger with readers long after it ends, is “The Woman Who Drew on Walls,” about a woman named Iris whose memory is muddled by dementia and her transgender son who helps care for her; it reveals the close relationship between the two, and Iris’ difficulties and rare moments of lucidity in touching and sometimes musing conversations. When Iris tells her son, “Your father. Well, he’s not your father,” he considers the veracity of her claim in light of her other confusions. The eclectic and cleverly nuanced characters, who dwell in Italy, El Salvador, Antarctica, and elsewhere, are recognizable and relatable—flawed and whimsical enough to be interesting without seeming unrealistic or outlandish. Labozzetta’s taut, self-assured storytelling is impressive, as is her ability to compassionately capture the complexities of ordinary lives in thought-provoking ways.

An exquisite set of stories steeped in humor, humanity, and grace” —*Kirkus Reviews*.