Britt Allen, adjunct instructor for the English Department and USU alumna, is publishing her first poetry chapbook with Finishing Line Press this summer. Her chapbook, titled *Harvest*, is the result of her master’s thesis here at USU, which she completed in May 2020 under professors Shanan Ballam, Ben Gunsberg, and Dennise Gackstetter. “Visceral, precise, the poems in *Harvest* illuminate childhood sexual abuse while detailing dangerous coping mechanisms such as alcoholism and sexual addiction,” professor and Logan City Poet Laureate Shanan Ballam writes. “But with persistence and courage, Britt Allen fashions trauma into stunning, imagistic poetry that ultimately celebrates the fierce, loving bond among siblings: “For us, only love, only streams / Of bright summer fish, midnights laced / With gold ribbon.” Professor Ben Gunsberg writes, “Brittney Allen’s *Harvest* digs into the soil of memory to uncover the sprawling, toxic roots of childhood sexual abuse. These poems keenly observe and ponder the poison, how it spreads through time, through family, and, despite itself, into moments of grace. Besides the pleasure of being led assuredly over dangerous ground, part of the pleasure of reading these poems lies in their attentiveness to sound and image. Whether they shout or whisper, we hear echoes of life’s beauties and terrors; we see “fish sealed up so long they sputter out, dead upon release.” Here is a poet unafraid to till her past and conjure from its loam a torch that guides us, unaltering, through the darkest pastures. Allen’s fearlessness is equaled by her artistic vigor, and the result is a stunning collection.”

Britt Allen takes revenge on the circumstances of her life by being blunt, bare, and brave on the page. She contends with a male-dominated society and abusive childhood as she moves into adulthood and the supposed saving grace of a marriage. Her speaker confesses traumatic memories, marital betrayals, and harmful coping mechanisms in a lyrical way, adding her voice to the abused poets of past and present who have also asked themselves – how can a raped daughter grow up to love a man? To break the silence forced upon her by an abusive parent, the speaker examines the pattern of sexual failures in her life, as well as her roles as a female, daughter, sister, and wife through poetry.

To preorder Britt’s book and support her work, visit https://www.finishinglinepress.com/product/harvest-by-britt-allen/. You can follow her work at brittallen.org.

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