

*Disaster* by Madison Davis

rev. by Gabriela Ramos

Timeless, Infinite Light Press

Released in winter of 2016 is a collection of short stories by Madison Davis titled *Disaster*. Though this is Davis' first book, she holds nothing back as she delves not only into different kinds of disasters from the Brooklyn Theatre Fire of 1876 to the Columbia Shuttle Disaster of 2003, as well as into her own perspective on the concept of disasters.

Davis does not cringe away from disaster; as she says on the first page, she takes "a step toward it." The minimalistic style gives room for impact when Davis bluntly states statistics of hundreds of casualties. Juxtaposition of objective facts and Davis's poetic musings on death, allows introspection on the reader's side. Davis easily tells the reader how the "583 dead are laid out in rows" after the Tenerife Airport Disaster and among the 575 dead from the UFA Train Disaster there were a large number of children. On the other hand, she describes death as "struggling, trapped inside, it is happening without present." Davis may be making a statement with this juxtaposition of fact and thought; amidst tragedy we are overwhelmed with emotions but fixate on statistics as if to validate or intensify those emotions. While Davis involves the reader with the inclusive "We" point of view, such as "We are too much sitting atop a nothingness so derived from ourselves...and we reconstruct our necessity in the aftermath," the reader is tasked to fill in the blanks with their own experiences of disaster or death often given the concise nature of *Disaster*.

With themes of grief and loss, and asking the readers to reflect on their own disasters, Davis showcases how disasters are a collective experience and, whether new or old, can almost transcend time.