

## **American Spikenard (Iowa Poetry Prize)**

Sarah Vap



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2006 Iowa Poetry Prize winner

"If everyone decided to call themselves a girl / that word would stop." In this award-winning volume of authoritative and assertive poems, Sarah Vap embarks on an emotional journey to the land of America's female children. Questioning, contradicting, radically and restlessly demanding acceptance, she searches for a way to move from serious girlhood to womanly love. Demonstrating the seriousness of female childhood—which is as dangerous and profound as war, economics, and history, that is, as manhood, in her view—Vap reveals the extremes of self-doubt and self-righteousness inherent in being a contemporary American girl.

"When we're overcome / by everything we think we love—then by morning / we're adults." Just as the oil of American spikenard may provide relief from childhood, so does Sarah Vap provide the kind of holy and extravagant love and honor that can relieve the growing pains of "everyone's little girl."

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