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**“MOVE OVER MARGARET ATWOOD, THIS BOOK FLIPS THE WOMAN SCRIPT.  
I’VE BEEN WAITING FOR IT MY WHOLE LIFE.”**

**- LIDIA YUKNAVITCH, *THE CHRONOLOGY OF WATER***

**WITH STRIKING PRAISE FROM MARY GAITSKILL, PETER HO DAVIES AND LIDIA YUKNAVITCH,  
A RECOVERING MOTHER’S SEARCH FOR SALVATION IN DYSTOPIAN AMERICA**

# **THE LIKELY WORLD**

**MELANIE CONROY GOLDMAN**

Should the addict mother of a damaged baby relinquish her child? Melanie Conroy-Goldman’s debut novel, *The Likely World* (Red Hen Press; August 4, 2020, ISBN-10:1597098086; trade paperback original; 300 pages; 6 x 9 inches; \$18:95.US) attempts to answer that question, and some others, in a bizarro, post-modern coming of age story whose central actor is a fictional drug that generates alternate realities and amnesia. One of the most profound literary antagonists ever created, *Cloud* detours, manhandles and almost wipes clean Mellie Itzkowitz-Kearns’ search for salvation in dystopian America.

“Conroy-Goldman’s **propulsive debut**...themes of motherhood, love, and addiction collide in **heartbreaking and dangerous** way...**the prose is exquisite**...this skillful twist on the addiction narrative is worth a look.”

**- Publishers Weekly**

“The woman at the center of *The Likely World* vibrates between addiction, memory, nostalgia and being in a future landscape about ten seconds away, in a revision of what we mean when we say family-- fragmenting its way into the future **one glorious mind flip at a time**. To be sober, to be fully alive she must risk having her heart broken open. **Move over Margaret Atwood**, this book flips the woman script. **I’ve been waiting my whole life for it. I love it.**”

**- Lidia Yuknavitch, *The Chronology of Water***

“Conroy-Goldman’s **gritty street postmodernism will rewire your brain** in ways that recall David Foster Wallace or Philip K. Dick. But it’s the depth of feeling here, about love, about motherhood, reminiscent of Rachel Kushner or Claire Vaye Watkins, that will break your heart.”

**- Peter Ho Davies, *The Fortunes***

# BMM

Set in 1980's Boston, Conroy-Goldman's tale begins when Mellie reunites with an eclectic band of sexually liberated, substance abusing teens she knows from Jewish summer camp. Unreliably parented, lonely and aware of the power of other girls, Mellie opts to exchange uncertain ambition for Cloud's numbing alternative reality. Their group includes Paul, the exquisite half-Chinese *Marjorie Morningstar* who gets his break in Siberia, runs afoul of the director in New York but will do anything for celebrity. By 2008 they're a struggling Cloud-addled couple living in LA, all but indentured to Lew, the fatherly, failed Russian smut distributor turned would-be producer of viral, AI-generated, celebrity deep fakes. Things go from pathetic to perverse when Lew bets the farm on Mellie's coding and Paul's star turn.

*"The Likely World* is bizarre and beautiful, equal parts brainy lit and gut-bucket pulp. Its heroine is unlike any female character I've ever encountered and I love her."

-Mary Gaitskill, *Veronica*

For anyone locked down and searching for a way out, Conroy-Goldman's book is a survival manual. Spawned by hippies, the unsupervised, unnamed generation of weaned-on wheatgrass *whatevers* was so narcotized by the '90's, so twisted for lack of care and inured to the dismembered society into which they emerged, they finally called them "X" and looked away. Until Mellie detonated and they couldn't. Or to quote super agent, author and recovering addict Bill Clegg who introduced BMM to Melanie's book by email - "it's a real doozy." And it was the manuscript's eerie resonance and literary significance that turned his head:

"Not since Dylar in Don DeLillo's *White Noise* or Phillip K Dick's Chew-Z have I met a fictional drug that so shrewdly conjures what's unsettling about life today, the mental ecosystems that we trap ourselves inside and their singular cost, the way Melanie does in these pages."

- Bill Clegg, *Portrait of an Addict as a Young Man*

## **About the Author**

Melanie Conroy-Goldman is a professor of English at the Hobart and William Smith Colleges in Geneva, New York. Her work has appeared in *The Southern Review* and *McSweeney's Internet Tendencies*. She lives in Ithaca, New York with her husband, daughter, and two step-daughters. In addition to teaching and writing, she runs the Trias Residency for Writers and teaches for the Cornell Prison Education Program. *The Likely World* is her debut novel.

## **About the Publicist**

BMM Worldwide is a New York-based literary development house that works with leading publishers, authors and agents across the areas of publicity, branding and representation. Clients include St. Martin's Press, W. W. Norton & Company, Betsy Lerner, Diamond and Silk, and Stephen J. Zipperstein. Backed by Peter Thiel, BMM partnered with *Times of London* columnist Melanie Phillips to create emBooks, an e-book publisher whose authors included Douglas Murray and Frederic Raphael.

## **THE LIKELY WORLD by Melanie Conroy-Goldman**

**Red Hen Press, August 2020, 300 pages, Trade Paperback, ISBN10: 1597098086, English, \$18.95**

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