

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Micah Ruelle: Two Poems

Micah Ruelle · Monday, July 12th, 2021

### The Last Birthday Gift

my father gave my mother  
was a pistol. Small, like her.

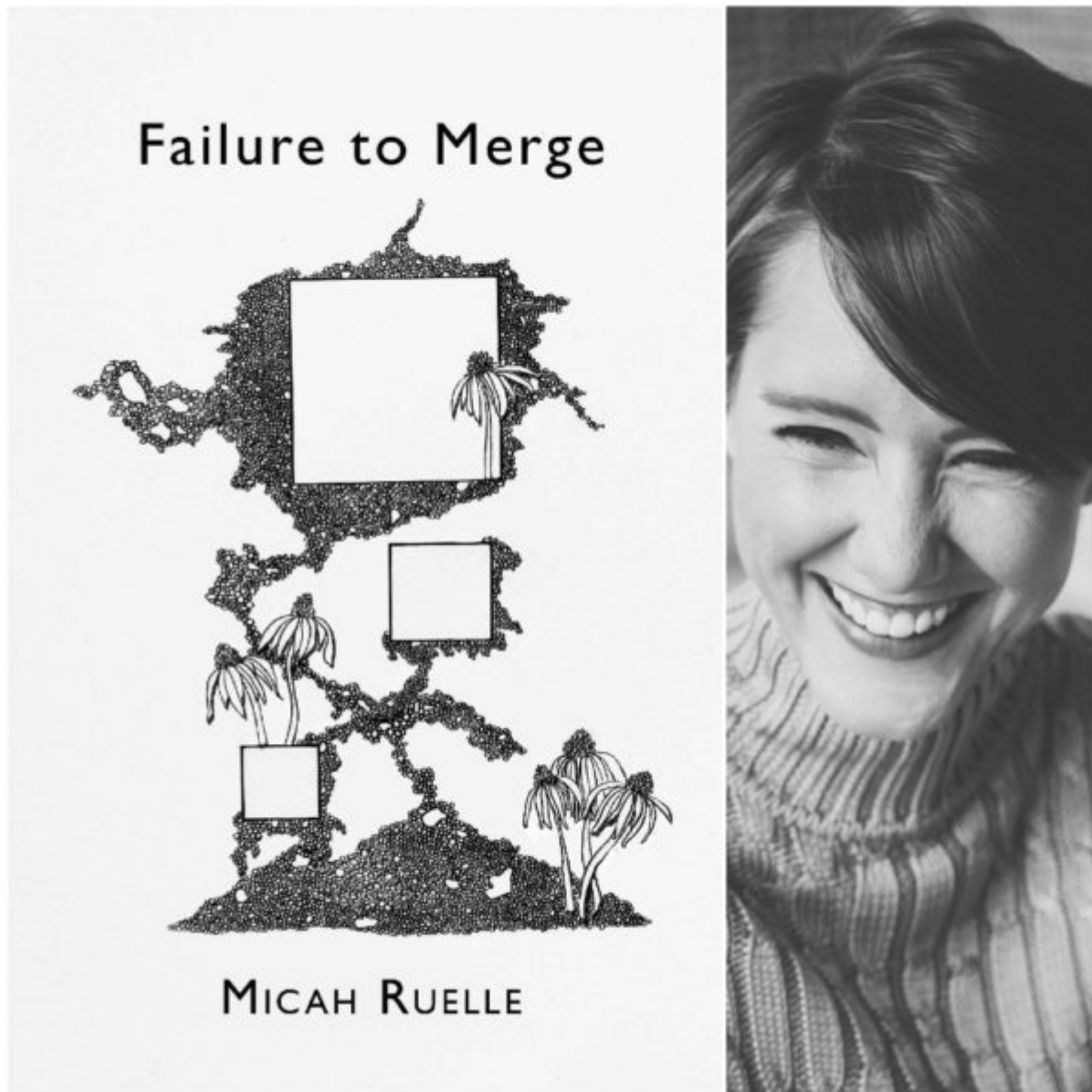
Who did he imagine  
she would have to become?

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### The Miracle Mobile

is running on fumes, and the check engine light  
came on 70 miles back. But this is not about  
the car that left me stranded just outside of Big Bend,  
is it? It's a metaphor for all the ways I push my luck  
by not going to the doctor or putting the address in  
while driving. I'm kidding. ish.  
When I turned the key in Marfa, it sounded a little funny—  
a slight hiss somewhere buried in the engine  
like a cancer in a body. Most tragedies begin  
with ignoring. Maybe you know this scene well:  
boots out the window and swamp-assed  
in the backseat of a car with no AC  
under the merciless Texan sun,  
waiting for AAA, when I finally begin to signal  
to all the parts of my life I've ignored  
that wound up costing me sums too large to pay,  
at least up-front or in full. I'm supposed to tell you  
about the sweet days of youth, losing my V card,  
the bitterness of aging, hardness of living,  
scraping for money, losing god.  
But, I figure it shook out alright.  
Maybe even better than I could've hoped,  
should I wind up picked apart by vultures  
before I'm rescued. It's not that acceptance is easy

for me, it's that I'm really tired of trying  
to pump this thing full when a valve is loose—  
maybe a leak? Who knows? The answer is buried  
beneath the engine. And even when the oily AAA guy  
pops the hood, poking around inside like a medic  
digging for bullets, and says "I'm real sorry, it's all gone to shit.  
You'll have to tow and junk it." It'll be cool. I'll be cool.  
I'll dig through the compartments of the car like a thief.  
I know what I'll have to face when I haul  
my big ass up and into Oily's truck.  
He'll say—more ponderingly than mean:  
"Shouldn't those old things have another 100,000  
on 'em? You must've been too rough with it."  
At that point, should I come clean?  
Should I tell him that once, I forgot to change the oil  
for quite some time, and when I finally remembered to check it—  
thousands of miles over the prescribed limit—the dipstick  
was bone-dry but that the car was still running like a dream  
on dreams? Maybe the last prayer that the miracle mobile  
ran on was its own for me: that one day I could bury its body  
in peace, knowing it would've wanted me to arrive home  
in one piece, into and through my own body.



*Failure to Merge*, by Micah Ruelle (Finishing Line Press). Click image to purchase.

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