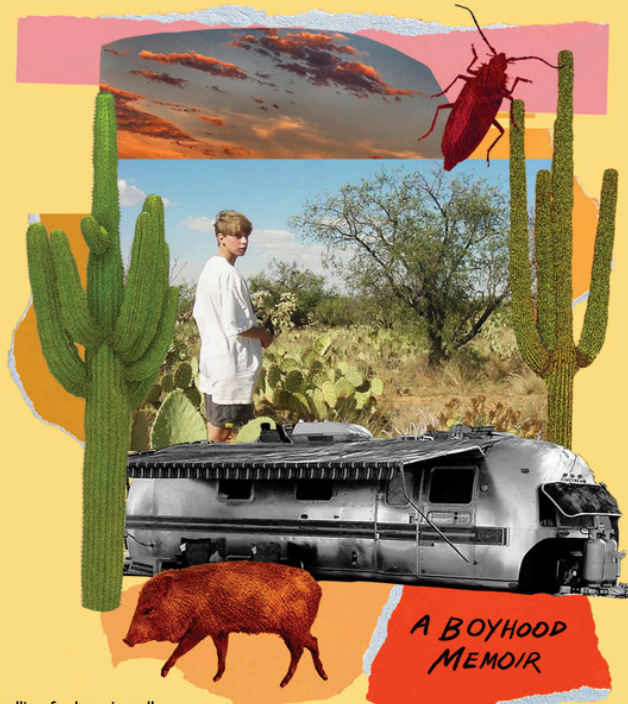


A STRIKING LITERARY MEMOIR OF GENDERFLUIDITY, CLASS, MASCULINITY, AND THE AMERICAN SOUTHWEST



CACTUS COUNTRY



"Enthralling, fearless, viscerally intelligent, and deeply moving."
—JUSTIN ST. GERMAIN,
author of *Son of a Gun*

ZOË BOSSIÈRE

A BOYHOOD MEMOIR



PUBLISHING DETAILS

Publisher: Abrams Books
Pub Date: 05/21/2024
ISBN: 9781419773181
Print Length: 272 pages
Eds: print, ebook, audio
Price: \$27.00

CONTACT

Publicity: Taryn Roeder
troeder@abramsbooks.com
Marketing: Christian Westermann
cwestermann@abramsbooks.com
Agency: Maggie Cooper
mcooper@aevitascreative.com

ABOUT CACTUS COUNTRY

Newly arrived in the Sonoran Desert, eleven-year-old Zoë's world is one of giant beetles, thundering javelinias, and gnarled paloverde trees. With the family's move to Cactus Country RV Park, Zoë has been given a fresh start and a new, shorter haircut. Although Zoë doesn't have the words to express it, he experiences life as a trans boy—and in Cactus Country, others begin to see him as a boy, too. Here, Zoë spends hot days chasing shade and freight trains with an ever-rotating pack of sunburned desert kids, and nights fending off his own questions about the body underneath his baggy clothes.

As Zoë enters adolescence, he must reckon with the sexism, racism, substance abuse, and violence endemic to the working class Cactus Country men he's grown close to, whose hard masculinity seems as embedded in the desert landscape as the cacti sprouting from parched earth. In response, Zoë adopts an androgynous style and new pronouns, but still cannot escape what it means to live in a gendered body, particularly when a fraught first love destabilizes their sense of self. But beauty flowers in this desert, too. Zoë persists in searching for answers that can't be found in Cactus Country, dreaming of a day they might leave the park behind to embrace whatever awaits beyond.

Equal parts harsh and tender, *Cactus Country* is an invitation for readers to consider how we find our place in a world that insists on stark binaries, and a precisely rendered journey of self-determination that will resonate with anyone who's ever had to fight to be themselves.



ZOË BOSSIERE

(they/she)

A writer from Tucson, AZ, Bossiere is the managing editor of *Brevity: A Journal of Concise Literary Nonfiction* and coeditor of two anthologies: *The Best of Brevity* and *The Lyric Essay as Resistance: Truth from the Margins*.

Bossiere's debut book, *Cactus Country: A Boyhood Memoir*, chronicles their experiences growing up as a trans boy in a Tucson, Arizona trailer park.



PRAISE FOR CACTUS COUNTRY

“[An] enthralling debut . . . Bossiere’s concise prose style and gift for scene-setting draws readers in as they unpick the somewhat esoteric nuances of their gender identity. This will resonate with anyone who’s longed for escape—from a hometown or their own body—but lacked an exit plan.”

—**Publishers Weekly, *starred review***

“A memoir about gender, the Sonoran Desert, and how stories can save . . . Bossiere’s hopeful, powerful life story also serves as a memorable study of gender and home.” —**Kirkus, *starred review***

“Heartrending and hopeful by turns, written with precision and a deep-rooted sense of place, *Cactus Country* is a soulful coming-of-age story I’m grateful to have read.” —**Esquire, “The Best Memoirs of 2024 (So Far)”**

“*Cactus Country* shimmers with the complexity of becoming. Zoë Bossiere writes their way into a truer story of selfhood, resisting the simpler narratives the world demanded. The result is lush, beautiful, and deeply liberating.” —
Alex Marzano-Lesnevich, author of *The Fact of a Body*

“A captivating tale of trans-kidhood that manages to be both precise and wild, so much like the landscape it describes.”
—**Melissa Febos, author of *Girlhood***

“*Cactus Country* is a thrilling and utterly unexpected memoir that I hope to be our generation’s *This Boy’s Life*—an indelible portrait of American boyhood that is at once typical and extraordinary . . . I have no doubt that *Cactus Country* will be read for decades to come.”
—**Meredith Talusan, author of *Fairest***

