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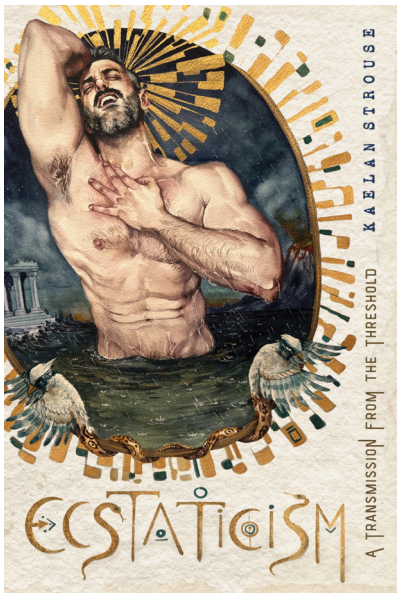
A MEMOIR OF SPIRITUAL AND SEXUAL LIBERATION

ECSTATICISM

A TRANSMISSION FROM THE THRESHOLD



KAELAN STROUSE

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Author is available for appearances and interviews
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Author Website: www.ecstaticself.com
Author's Instagram (116K): @kaelanecstaticself
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SYNOPSIS

KAELAN STROUSE WAS BORN DROWNING. AND THEN ALL THE OTHER DEATHS CAME.

Ecstaticism is a genre-blurring work of memoir, myth, mysticism, and embodied philosophy about what happens when the identities and certainties we have built our lives around collapse.

Meandering through grief, queerness, sexuality, spiritual rupture, and the strange beauty of being alive, Kaelan Strouse explores the thresholds between who we have been and who we are becoming. Weaving intimate memoir with irreverent myth, animist wonder, and erotic devotion, he asks us to reconsider what makes a life sacred. What if the point was never to transcend our humanity, but to fall more deeply in love with it?

What remains is an unruly love letter to this fleeting, imperfect, sacred life—and to those with whom we share it.

Keywords: Queer Spirituality, Spiritual Memoir, LGBTQ Nonfiction, Personal Transformation, Ecstatic Living, Self-Acceptance, Authenticity, Mysticism, Embodiment, Healing Journey, Sacred Sexuality, Queer Mysticism, Sexuality and Spirituality, Tantra, Spiritual Awakening, Erotic Spirituality, Consciousness, Divine Masculine, Mind-Body Connection, Spiritual Liberation



KAELAN STROUSE is an author, spiritual guide, teacher, and founder of *Ecstatic Self*, a platform devoted to the intersections of spirituality, embodiment, sexuality, and authentic selfhood. His spiritual practice spans decades and includes seven years living in a meditative ashram, extensive study of classical yoga, Tantra, meditation, and energetic traditions, and years of guiding others through private mentorship, workshops, retreats, and ceremonial gatherings. A graduate of Northwestern University, Strouse began his professional life as an actor, writer, and director before bringing his creative and spiritual practices together in the work he does today. He is the author of *Journey to the Ecstatic Self*, *I Dreamt of Flight*, and *48 Gateways to the Ecstatic Self*. Through his writing and teaching, Strouse explores the body as sacred ground and challenges the divisions often placed between sexuality and spirituality.

SIBLING RIVALRY PRESS

DISTURB/ENRAPTURE

Sibling Rivalry Press is an independent publisher dedicated to work that challenges, connects, and expands the literary conversation. Founded in 2010, SRP has published poetry, fiction, memoir, and more by emerging and established writers, with a particular commitment to LGBTQ+ voices and books that explore identity, spirituality, sexuality, family, and the full complexity of human experience. Home to first books by authors such as Ocean Vuong and Kaveh Akbar, the press also publishes *Assaracus: A Journal of Gay and Queer Poetry* and remains committed to being an amplifier for writers whose work asks readers to see themselves—and one another—more fully. Its mission is to publish work that disturbs and enraptures.

WWW.SIBLINGRIVALRYPRESS.COM

PRAISE FOR ECSTATICISM

"Kaelan Strouse teaches people to fuck shame and live authentically."

— BILLY PORTER, Emmy, Grammy, and Tony Award–winning actor, singer, and author

"It's honest, weird, sexy, spiritual, and a little filthy. Spirituality with its clothes off—and I LIVE for that."

— TRINITY THE TUCK, drag artist, performer, and *RuPaul's Drag Race All Stars* winner

"I can't help but wonder how different and easier my journey might have been had I read this when I was younger... I feel damn lucky to have read Kae's triumphant story about not just loving but forgiving and embracing our full selves."

— WILLIAM NORWICH, author of *My Mrs. Brown* and longtime *Vogue* writer and editor

"Kaelan has created a thoughtful and provocative invitation to embrace the mystery of being human and discover the sacred not somewhere beyond this life, but right here."

— CHRISTIAN DE LA HUERTA, author of *Coming Out Spiritually*, *Awakening the Soul of Power*, and *Conscious Love*

"When I grow up, I want to be just like Kaelan! 'Ecstaticism' is what happens when we stop fearing who we are, divinely embrace our sensual selves and unapologetically come into our own."

— THOMAS ROBERTS, Emmy Award–winning broadcast journalist and network television anchor

PRAISE FOR
ECSTATICISM

"Kaelan's words will wrap around you and take you on a beautiful journey of healing and freedom. This book is a beautiful guide for anyone looking to express themselves freely and live their lives fully."

— Travis Holp, celebrity medium and author of *Are You There, Spirit? It's Me, Travis*

"From the prelude on you are instantly transported away on a journey of self realization and wonder. Then, safely returned and inspired to navigate your path ahead. A must read."

— Jai Rodriguez, original cast member of the Emmy Award–winning *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*

"Feral, poetic, and deliciously irreverent—a profound invitation to stop trying to escape our humanity and start celebrating it."

— Darren Main, author of *Yoga and the Path of the Urban Mystic*.

"Raised in a church that taught shame of the body, sex, nudity, and the gay part of me I could never change, I found *Ecstaticism* unexpectedly healing. Kaelan doesn't reject spirituality; he reimagines it. He offers a path away from shame and toward joy, authenticity, and the radical idea that our humanity is something to be celebrated, not hidden."

— Del Shores, writer/director of *Sordid Lives* and *Southern Baptist Sissies*

"Forget the gurus. Kaelan Strouse, offers us a richly poetic and deeply personal exploration of life and spirituality, anchored firmly in both the liminal and in the pleasures of the body. This is a text that is sacredly irreverent, calling out philosophies that would keep us separate and ashamed and instead focuses on that which affirms the divine within each of us, even that which some might consider 'profane.' Written from the perspective of a queer man, Kaelan communicates a spirituality not expressed through rigid practices, but through kindness, empathy, and even sexual pleasure, using his own journey to articulate the little initiations that life offers along the way. Part memoir, part vision quest, this is a text that will open eyes and hearts and offers much to those who would seek the deep connection of the divine but for whom traditional paths of hierarchical control have proven toxic. This book is a much-needed balm for the soul."

— Storm Faerywolf, author of *The Satyr's Kiss* and *Claiming the Witchfire*