



The Observable Universe

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Are we ever truly lost in the internet age? *The Observable Universe* is a moving, genre-defying memoir of a woman reckoning with the loss of her parents, the virus that took them, and what it means to search for meaning in a hyperconnected world. When she was a child, Heather McCalden lost her parents to AIDS. She was seven when her father died and ten when she lost her mother. Growing up in Los Angeles in the 1990s, her personal devastation was mirrored by a city that was ground zero for the virus and its destruction. Years later, after becoming a writer and an artist, she begins to research the mysterious parallels between the histories of AIDS and the internet. She questions what it means to 'go viral' in an era of explosive biological and virtual contagion and simultaneously finds her own past seeping into her investigation. While connecting her disparate strands of research – images, fragments of scientific thought, musings on Raymond Chandler and late-night Netflix binges – she makes an unexpected discovery about what happened to her family and who her parents might have been. Entwining an intensely personal search with a history of viral culture and an ode to Los Angeles, *The Observable Universe* is a prismatic account of loss calibrated precisely to our existence in a post-pandemic, post-internet life.

Read more: <https://fitzcarraldoeditions.com/books/the-observable-universe/>

Heather McCalden

Heather McCalden is a multidisciplinary artist working with text, image and movement. She is a graduate of the Royal College of Art (2015) and has exhibited at Tanz Company Gervasi, Roulette Intermedium, Pierogi Gallery, National Sawdust, Zabludowicz Collection, Testbed 1, Flux Dubai and with Seattle Symphony Orchestra. In 2017 she attended the Emerging Writers Intensive at the Banff Centre for the Arts and Creativity and returned in 2018 for their Summer Writers Residency. In January 2021, she participated in the Tin House Winter Workshop. *The Observable Universe* is her first book.