

"Silent Cauldron" -- New Historical Fiction by E.B. Moore

Silence her crime, silence her punishment. From the author of "Stones in the Road" -- new historical fiction from Maine-based writer E.B. Moore.



Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Oct 15, 2025 ([IssueWire.com](http://www.IssueWire.com)) - "Nineteenth-century gender restrictions are portrayed with focused eloquence in the startling historical novel *Silent Cauldron*."-- [Foreword Reviews](#)

Frayed Edge Press is pleased to announce the publication of *Silent Cauldron* by E.B. Moore.

In 1830s America, Sam, a young woman mistaken for a boy, dares to invade the horse-breeding world of men. She succeeds at first, but witnesses an assault that could destroy her closest friend and tip the balance of power between two monied families: one with social clout, their fortune waning, and one with new money linked to the slave trade.

To save her friend, Sam stays silent, yet in a twist of influence, she's convicted of attempted murder of the "new-money" son, a boy attracted to the boy Sam is thought to be. She's sentenced to uncountable years in Pennsylvania's Eastern State Penitentiary, a supposedly "kinder" prison where each prisoner is kept in strict silence, in a solitary tomb-like cell with one small skylight.

As a Quaker, silence has always been healing for Sam, but when time grows amorphous and the guards' attentions turn vengeful, her grip on reality is threatened. A saving grace comes in the form of Willa, up from underground pipes, a prisoner much like herself who keeps hidden in Sam's cell,

someone to confide in, someone who knows the worst of what might come. As Sam nears madness, Willa plots the guards' destruction, a plan that will either ensure Sam's release and her own, or end in death for both.

This story of psychological suspense explores the tensions a girl experiences when she wants wider horizons than what the prevailing society deems appropriate. Facing the dangers of entering these uncharted worlds, she's forced to navigate the juxtaposition of truth and illusion, enduring a silence her oppressors turn into a sword, a sword she must learn to wield herself.

Based on true conditions in Philadelphia's Eastern State Penitentiary, now closed and turned into a museum, this story serves as a reminder of the problems that persist in prisons across the country.

E. B. Moore is a metal sculptor turned poet turned novelist. She grew up Quaker in rural Pennsylvania, on a Noah's Ark farm, with two of every animal plus a herd of Cheviot sheep. She raised guinea hens and ring-necked pheasants, and ran a boarding stable, saving her earnings for further education.

Later in life, she visited the Eastern State Penitentiary with a friend involved in another state's prison system. She became fascinated with this prison turned museum and this novel grew out of her extensive research into the history of Eastern State and the original well-meaning but misguided philosophy behind it.

E.B. Moore is also the author of the poetry chapbook *New Eden, A Legacy* (Finishing Line Press, 2009) and the novels *Loose in the Bright Fantastic* (Frayed Edge Press, 2023), *An Unseemly Wife* (NAL/Penguin 2014), and *Stones in the Road* (NAL/Penguin/Random House, 2015). She is the mother of three, the grandmother of five, and currently lives with her partner in Scarborough, Maine.

Early readers of the book have had this to say:

"...explodes from the page, unearthing a hidden piece of penal history and delving into the grim reality of an experimental Quaker-run prison. Moore intertwines the harrowing experiences of a woman tortured for striving to live authentically, both in her work and personal life. Moore's exquisite prose illuminates a past where women were imprisoned in both literal and virtual chains, revealing profound truths with shattering, poignant clarity." --**Randy Susan Meyers**, International Bestselling Author

"Moore's lyrical prose infuses vivid, evocative imagery into this meticulously researched historical fiction. The Silent Cauldron mines the extraordinary depths of human cruelty in...prison to uncover the how far certain societies have gone to break the body, spirit, and will of women who risk being different. Moore accomplishes that task brilliantly, and in the darkest places she also finds sparks of resistance within one tortured victim and reveals the separate, stronger self within that she musters to stay alive." --**Lynne Hugo**, award-winning author of *The Language of Kin*

"In her signature lyrical prose, E.B. Moore's latest, Silent Cauldron, is a riveting story of a young woman attempting to straddle binary worlds. Silence is her power. Friendship her saving grace. But 1830's Pennsylvania isn't an easy place for a girl like Sam to survive. Straddling story lines between her coming-of-age and unjust imprisonment, the novel culminates in an harrowing ending that holds up a mirror to our common sins." --**Michelle Hoover** author of *The Quickening* and *Bottomland*

"A poetically told story of a heroic young woman who faced horrific injustice in a prison ostensibly set up to be humane, but which abused her and tried to crush her spirit. I found myself rooting for Sam, a unique historic character with true grit who, if she lived today, would be at the forefront of the fight for

women's rights."--**Virginia Pye**, author of *Shelf Life of Happiness*

Silent Cauldron officially launched September 30, 2025 and may be purchased directly from the press at: <https://www.frayededgepress.com/store/p151/silent.html> The book is also available through major online booksellers, including Amazon and [Barnes & Noble](#) and most library book jobbers, including Ingram.

Frayed Edge Press is a small independent press located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, which specializes in publishing marginalized voices, forgotten history, overlooked literature in translation, and works that wrestle with important questions impacting contemporary society. For more information about the press, visit our website at: <https://www.frayededgepress.com/>

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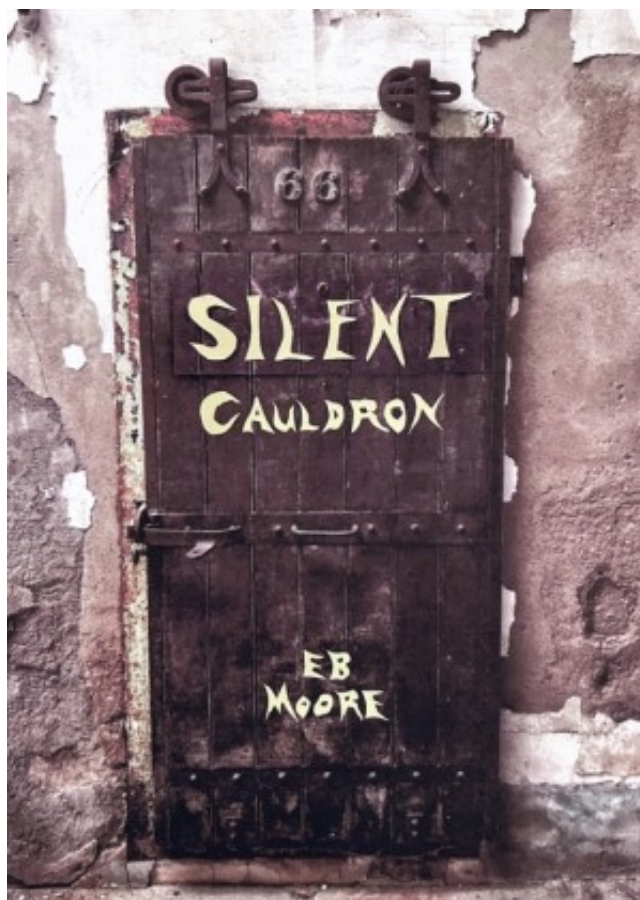
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