

FOUR WAY BOOKS

SPRING 2021 POETRY
FALL 2020 POETRY & FICTION
RECENTLY PUBLISHED &
NOTEWORTHY

Pastiche

Deep in the fields, the greenish stalks were twice
my height, a forest for one who had not seen
the likes of oaks or birches. Sugar's vice
hung in the air, its sweetness somewhere between

a pastry and decay. In memory, the cane
opened its arms allowing a boy to escape.
But memory lies so well, the fields of cane
as much a trap as any means of escape.

Too young to wield a machete, far too young,
I vanished down the endless rows of cane,
my mother screaming out for me to stop.

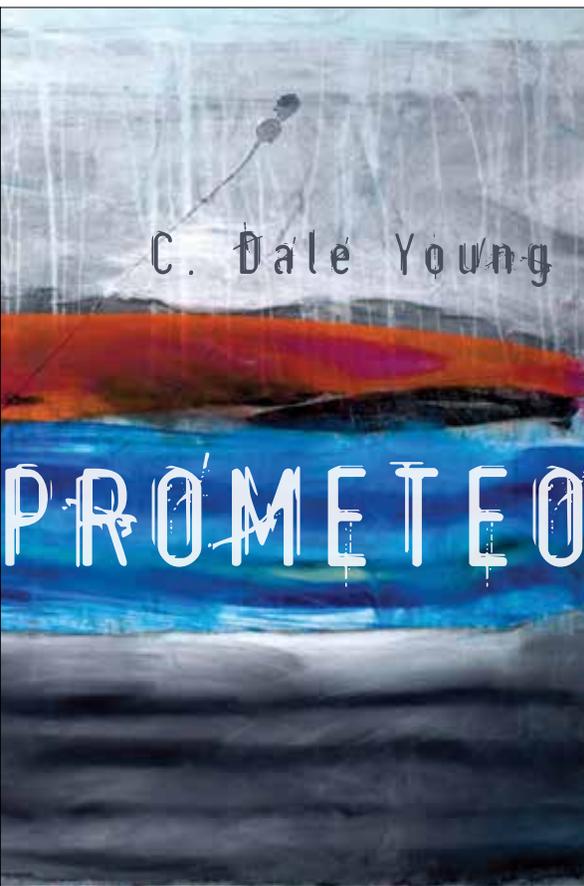
The yard hands hacked out space to plant the young.
For them, what safety there among the cane.
For me, it's where I learned to beg a man to stop.

author photo by William Anthony



C. Dale Young

C. Dale Young practices medicine full-time. He is the author, with Four Way Books, of *The Affliction* (2018), a novel in stories, and the poetry collections *The Second Person* (2007), a finalist for the Lambda Literary Award in Poetry; *Torn* (2011), named one of the best poetry collections of 2011 by National Public Radio, and *The Halo* (2016). He is a previous recipient of the Grolier Prize, the Stanley W. Lindberg Award for Literary Editing, and the 2017/2018 Hanes Award in Poetry given by the Fellowship of Southern Writers to honor a poet at mid-career. A Fellow of the National Endowment for the Arts, the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, and the Rockefeller Foundation, his poems and short fiction have appeared widely. He lives in San Francisco.



An unflinching reckoning with the traumas of one's life and those inherited through a history of exacted injustices

“Some men find nothing, and others / find omens everywhere,” writes C. Dale Young in *Prometeo*, a collection whose speaker is a proverbial “child of fire.” In poems that thrive off of their distinct voice, the speaker confronts generational and lived trauma and their relationship to his multi-ethnicity. We are presented with the idea of the past’s burial in the body and its constellatory manifestations—both in the speaker and those around him—in disease and pain, but also in strength and a capacity for intimacy with others and nature. Grounded in precise language, Young’s examination of the past and its injuries turns into a celebration of the self. In stark, exuberant relief, the speaker proclaims “...I was splendidly blended, genetically engineered / for survival.” Resilient, Young’s poems find beauty in landscape, science, and meditation.

ISBN: 978-1-945588-70-9

\$16.95 | Paper

6 x 9 | 76 pages

Pub Date: February 2021 | Poetry

Prometeo

“Heartbreaking and beautiful is *Prometeo*, a book so eloquent the heart stops but refuses to stop reading. These are glorious poems in memoriam for friends, family members, patients. ‘I have written too many elegies,’ the poet says, ‘the living have become jealous of the amount I have written for the dead.’ Indeed, fellow poets must be jealous of this book’s fearless spirit, of its music. I have been reading these poems of sorrow and eloquence non-stop for days now. Their lyric impulse is inimitable.”

—Ilya Kaminsky

“At once concerned with personal and generational history, *Prometeo* is a book of gorgeously-wrought poems that unveils deeply human truths. Young’s unparalleled gifts for formal constraints and sound-driven language remind us that beauty is found in all things and that despite the wounds, language can serve as a lighthouse guiding us, again and again, back to love.”

—Ada Limón

Playing Field

You were standing
in the rain

with a yellow tulip
for someone else,

and leveled I
was—the house we

never built by
one gust flattened.

author photo by Adrienne Mathiowetz



Andrea Cohen

Andrea Cohen's poems and stories have appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Poetry*, *The Threepenny Review*, *Glimmertrain*, *The New Republic*, *The Hudson Review* and elsewhere. Her earlier poetry collections with Four Way Books include *Nightshade* (2019), *Unfathoming* (2017), and *Furs Not Mine* (2015). She directs the Blacksmith House Poetry Series in Cambridge, MA.



Clever, capricious poems grounded in the very matter of life: loving, losing, and persisting

Andrea Cohen's *Everything* approaches the idea of the macro through an elastic inquiry of the micro. The collection examines logic through analogy; for example, if everything is formed of anything, then isn't absence a product of abundance? In poems that follow their own line of questioning wherever it may lead—to destinations that are often unexpected and always rich with discovery—Cohen explores love, grief, and alternate endings. The worlds she creates in the poems expand, contract, change shape, and change course. On the subject of waiting, Cohen writes, "... someone kept / punching a vending / machine, as if another / hour might come out," and in the pliant universe of this collection, time might as well be vended or dispensed in an unexpected way. These poems ask us to remain open and to circumvent ordinary answers on the route toward extraordinary, nuanced ones.

ISBN: 978-1-945588-68-6

\$16.95 | Paper

6 x 9 | 136 pages

Pub Date: February 2021 | Poetry

Everything

"The poems in *Everything* are so short and sharply formed, and so individually memorable, that one is caught off guard by their cumulative force. This is a work of great and sustained attention, true intelligence, and *soul*."
—Christian Wiman

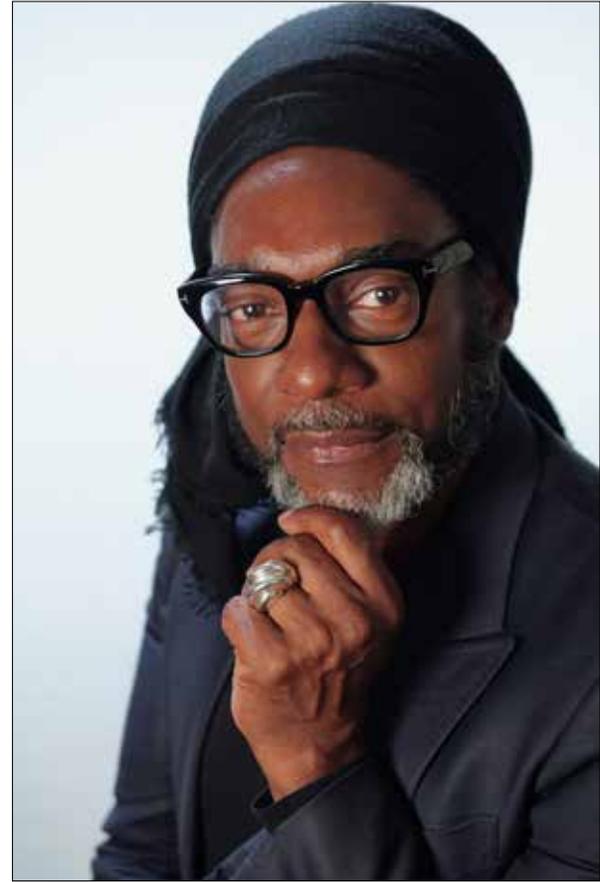
Praise for Andrea Cohen:

"This is acutely literary writing that wears its literariness lightly enough for long journeys to unfamiliar places."
—David Orr, *The New York Times*

Lunch Menu: Summer 1977

Spam
ribbon cane
popcorn & hot sauce
cucumbers & dill pickles
side-of-the-road picked plums
knife-sliced fried potatoes
boiled peanuts
mayonnaise & ketchup sandwiches
white rice w/salt, pepper & butter
Vienna Sausage & Saltine crackers
frozen sugar-sweetened white milk
baked store-stolen yams

author photo by Abby Brenker



Rodney Terich Leonard

Rodney Terich Leonard was born in Nixburg, Alabama. An Air Force veteran who served during the Gulf War, his society profiles and poems have appeared in *Southern Humanities Review*, *Red River Review*, *The Huffington Post*, *BOMB Magazine*, *The Cortland Review*, *Indolent Books-What Rough Beast*, *Four Way Review*, *The New York Times*, *The Amsterdam News*, *The Village Voice*, *For Colored Boys...* (anthology edited by Keith Boykin) and other publications. He holds degrees from The New School, NYU Tisch School of the Arts, and Teachers College Columbia University. A *Callaloo* poetry fellow, he received an MFA in Poetry from Columbia University and currently lives in Manhattan.

Sweetgum & Lightning



Rodney Terich Leonard

An intersection of jazz and the written word:
poems to be experienced and felt

Sweetgum & Lightning lets us into an extraordinary poetic universe, shaped by a vernacular rooted in the language of self, one's origins, and music. In poems that are deeply sensual in nature, Rodney Terich Leonard considers gender and sexuality, art, poverty, and community. Imagery expands through unexpected lexical associations and rumination on the function of language; words take on new meaning and specificity, and the music of language becomes tantamount to the denotations of words themselves. Through extensive webs of connotation, Leonard's narratives achieve a sense of accuracy and intimacy. The nuanced lens of these poems is indicative of the honesty of expression at work in the collection—one that affirms the essentiality of perception to living and memory.

ISBN: 978-1-945588-74-7

\$16.95 | Paper

6 x 9 | 104 pages

Pub Date: February 2021 | Poetry

Sweetgum & Lightning

“With the vernacular of Zora Neale Hurston and the music of Leontyne Price, Rodney Terich Leonard honors the past while addressing the present moment in *Sweetgum & Lightning*. Take your time taking these poems in; they're meant to be sung aloud. As you listen, what you'll hear is what happens when the spirit is captured on the page. When the news of the day is too much to bear and we can't find the words, be grateful for this poet, who arrives when, ‘We need somebody to sing us, at least, a song.’”

—A. Van Jordan

“Rodney Leonard's *Sweetgum & Lightning* is a cascade of image and song, charged by a voice that can pivot from reverence to gleeful vulgarity inside a single line. In these elegies, flashbacks, odes, indictments, riffs, and adorations we find a self engaged in constant revision yet remaining steady: ‘I just wanna be jumpseat & aero in my own // historical zoom.’ As much as this book looks to the past, there's no coasting on nostalgia here. ‘The past / creeps wild / in my eyes,’ and memory ‘lurks & it forgives,’ but Leonard is no lurker; even when he seems to be observing from somewhere off to the side, he's at the center of the action. He stacks his lines with the accoutrements of queer desire, a gesture of both affirmation and subversion—in other words, a show of strength. *Sweetgum & Lightning* isn't just good poetry, it's good company too.”

—Mark Bibbins

And He Will Guide My Craft

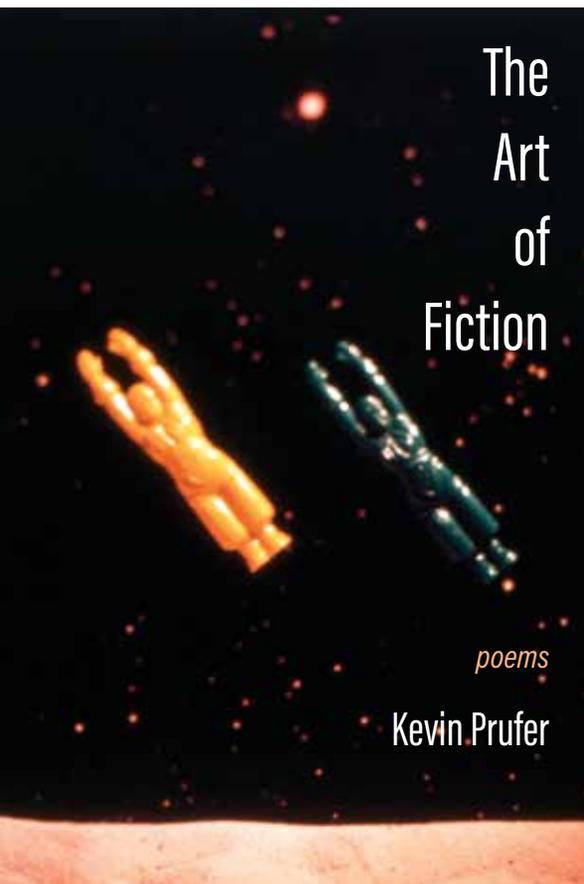
that is not a burning building it is a bonfire on the beach
and those are not soldiers they are fishermen
I am rowing us closer you will see
how those are not guns but fishing poles
a star is not a fighter plane
an island is not an aircraft carrier
and can you see the fishermen cooking their catch in the fire
I am rowing us closer
do you hear their laughter on the wind
yes it sounds like people crying but it is not
do you hear the fire popping yes it sounds like pistols
taking prisoners to the afterlife but it is not
I have always been with you
these are my hands rowing your boat
we shouldn't be on open water when the sun rises
we will dock here this is a peaceful island
you can rest you can eat
that is not smoke it is mist wrapping the cliffs
while the fishermen tend their fires
those are not bodies they are people sleeping
we will leave our boat behind when I say run
we will run as fast as we can across the sand
don't look back you will disappear into the woods
and I will disappear into your mind

author photo by Emy Johnston



Kevin Prufer

Kevin Prufer was born in Cleveland, OH, and attended Wesleyan University, The Hollins Writing Program, and Washington University. He is the author of seven poetry collections, including the Four Way Books titles *How He Loved Them* (2018); *Churches* (2014), named one of the ten best poetry books of the year by *The New York Times Book Review*; *In a Beautiful Country* (2011), a Rilke Prize and Poets' Prize finalist; and *National Anthem* (2008), named one of the five best poetry books of the year by *Publishers Weekly* and a finalist for the Poets' Prize. Prufer is the recipient of many awards, including four Pushcart prizes, several awards from the Poetry Society of America, fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Lannan Foundation, and several Best American Poetry selections. He is a professor of English and Creative Writing at the University of Houston.



An investigation, performed through storytelling, of the constructed beliefs of society and individuals

In this his eighth collection of poetry (and fifth with Four Way Books), Prufer’s career-spanning talent for estranging the familiar—and also for recording the unthinkable with eerie directness—recurs, enhanced and transformed by the collection’s meta-level attention to the role of fiction in our civic lives. Prufer describes, often through personae, a near future, tracing there the political gambit of Fake News and the role of the imagination in our self-understanding (whether it’s cogent or delusional). Via both satire and direct address (to the point of reader-squeamishness), Prufer aims to understand the ugly-casual atmosphere of our often racialized, pervasive distrust. *The Art of Fiction* fundamentally understands that fictions are deployed to divide us, and they work: they get under our skin. Prufer powerfully explores the roles of imagination and art in how we explain ourselves to ourselves.

ISBN: 978-1-945588-72-3

\$16.95 | Paper

6 x 9 | 132 pages

Pub Date: February 2021 | Poetry

The Art of Fiction

Praise for *How He Loved Them*

“Prufer considers the complex relationship between beauty and violence in his remarkable seventh collection of poetry, tracing the barely perceptible ways that industrial modernity ‘gilds us until we glitter.’ . . . An accomplished, highly nuanced inquiry into spectacle and spectatorship.”

—*Publishers Weekly*, starred review

“Prufer writes with deceptive calmness. No other poet in the U.S. so effectively employs unembellished language in the service of wildly inventive renderings as he does, and *How He Loved Them*, his seventh collection, is a confessional, hallucinatory warning about the future we are constructing....”

—Kevin Clark, *The Georgia Review*

Praise for Kevin Prufer:

“A gothic extravaganza featuring alligators, avalanches and medical devices left inside bodies, delivered largely in long, musical free verse lines. Poetry at full boil, poured with deliberate abandon.”

—David Orr, *The New York Times*

Disappearing Act

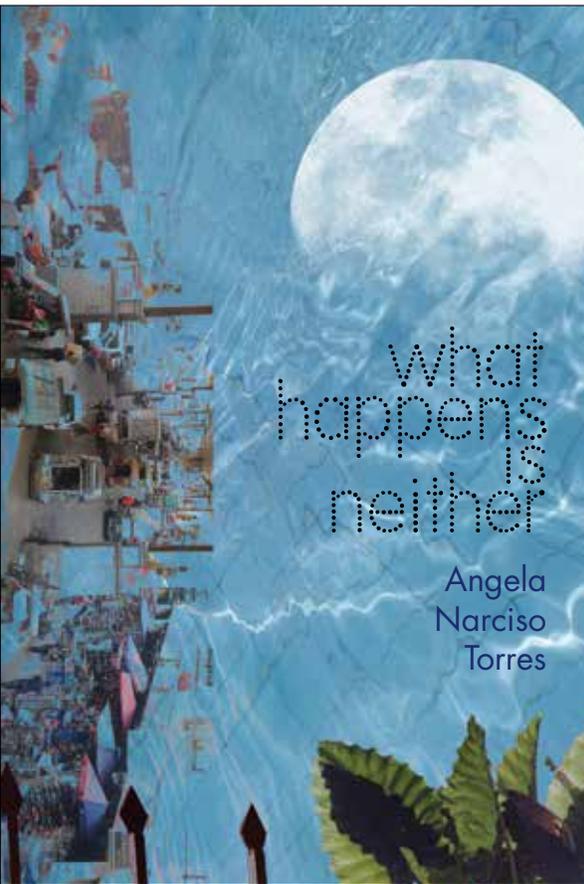
Mother chose the dress—mint-green with puffed sleeves. White starched collar, electric-pleat skirt, lace socks that chafed my ankles. At the party, she made me kiss everyone: aunts reeking of *Joy* by Jean Patou, sway-backed uncles cradling beers, my grandmother smoking clove cigarettes between puffs of her inhaler. Someone was laughing loudly. Someone played a ukulele. From a far table, the rumble of mah-jongg tiles being shuffled by a quorum of matrons, their lacquered nails clicking, wreathed in cigarette smoke. Cousins wrestled on the scorched lawn. A small place behind my ribs felt tender, making it hard to breathe. I wanted most of all to lie in the pink shell of my room, a book within reach. Someone passed around colorful sandwiches in the shape of card suits: diamonds, spades, clubs. Someone carried a tray of fizzy drinks, handing them to the grownups. I imagined sneaking a sip and getting smaller and smaller like Alice, then crawling into Mother's conch evening bag, the clasp closing overhead with a satisfied click. Mother whispered a greeting to a woman in a floral print kaftan. I vanished into their murmurs and shadows, a cloud of camphor and carnations.

author photo by Aaron Bristol Photography



Angela Narciso Torres

Angela Narciso Torres is the author of *Blood Orange* (Willow Books Literature Award for Poetry, 2013) and *To the Bone* (Sundress Publications, 2020). Recent work appears in *Poetry*, *Missouri Review*, and *Quarterly West*. A graduate of Warren Wilson MFA Program for Writers and Harvard Graduate School of Education, Angela has received fellowships from Bread Loaf Writers' Conference, Illinois Arts Council, and Ragdale Foundation. She won the 2019 Yeats Poetry Prize (W.B. Yeats Society of New York) and was named one of *NewCityLit's Lit 50: Who Really Books in Chicago* in 2016. Born in Brooklyn and raised in Manila, she serves as a senior and reviews editor for *RHINO Poetry*. She lives in Southern California.



A deeply-sensorial reflection on presence, absence, and the act of losing

“What Happens Is Neither / the end nor the beginning. / Yet we’re wired to look for signs,” offers the speaker of Angela Narciso Torres’s latest collection, which approaches motherhood, aging, and mourning through a series of careful meditations. In music, mantra, and prayer, Torres explores the spaces in and around grief—in varying proximity to it and from different vantage points. She writes both structurally formal poems that enfold the emotionality of loss and free verse that loosens the latch on memory and lets us into the sensory worlds of the speaker’s childhood and present. In poems set in two countries and homes, Torres considers what it means to leave a mark, vanish, and stay in one place. In a profound act of recollection and preservation, Torres shows us how to release part of ourselves but remain whole.

ISBN: 978-1-945588-69-3

\$16.95 | Paper

6 x 9 | 110 pages

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What Happens Is Neither

“In *What Happens Is Neither*, Angela Narciso Torres has jimmed the lock to a house of intricate family memory and sumptuous wisdom. These are poems of intense reflection and loss, but also of rediscovery and delight. As the years pass and one becomes overwhelmed by what is remembered and all that has been forgotten, such poems might restore the balance that allows us to live with and beyond that loud clanging in the heart.”

—Tim Seibles

“Nights, listening to Bach, ‘it turned her sadness into something she recognized.’ The grace of these eloquent poems is in precisely such recognition. In images drawn from nature (‘what the body remembers’) and a pitch perfect ear, her lines reach the profound sadness and beauty of human existence, finding speech for what both demands and resists utterance. She writes like the craftsman of her poem whose ‘tools, like locusts, peel the tattered layers / that drift like early snow, the wood’s deep grain exposed.’”

—Eleanor Wilner

What Remains

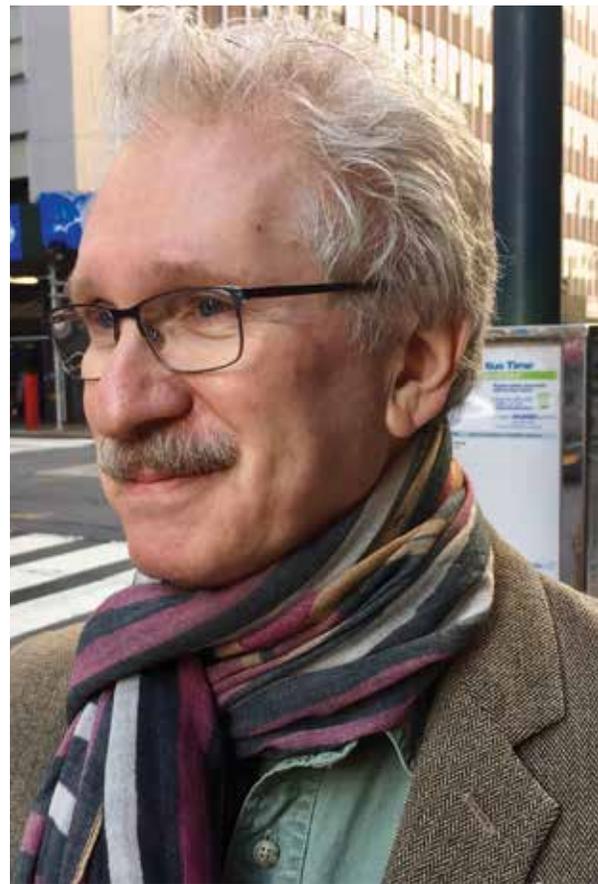
Yes, bread that's poisoned. And not even one sip of air.
How hard it is for the wound of life to be cured.
Joseph himself, sold to Egypt as a slave,
could not have been more heavily grieved.

Then under the sky-swarm of stars, some Bedouins come.
They quiet their horses. Then in turn, with eyes closed,
each invents some chanted fragment of their day
of epic nothing, that only brought them boredom,

for among such riders, little's needed to inspire—
in the dunes, one man lost a quiver of arrows,
others traded some geldings for a mare—events are
only a mist that thins and disappears.

But if—if—such songs are sung out to the end
with all the heart, with all the breath in the lungs,
almost everything vanishes . . . And what remains
is the desert vastness, the stars, the one who sings.

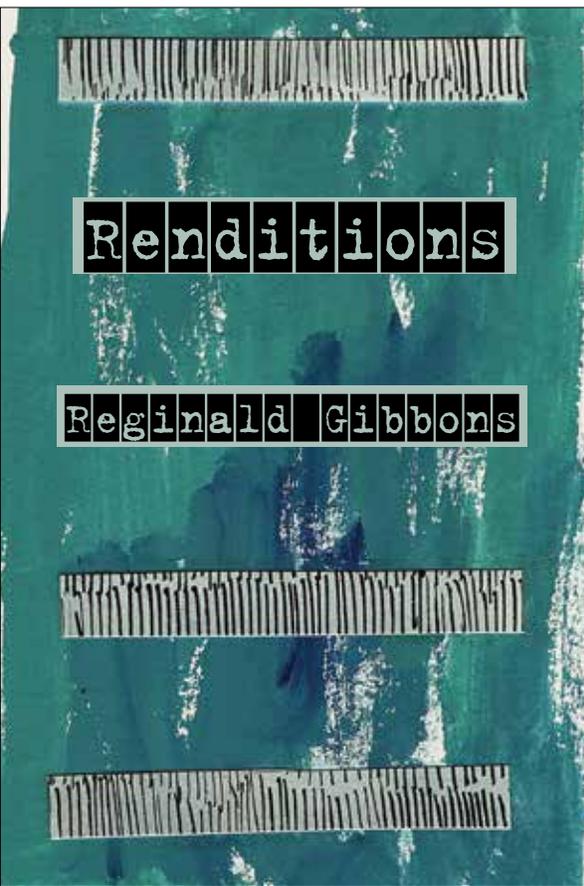
—Osip Mandelstam (1913)



author photo by Cornelia Spelman

Reginald Gibbons

Reginald Gibbons is the author of eleven poetry collections. His *Creatures of a Day* was a finalist for the National Book Award. His book *Saints* won publication in the National Poetry Series. Volumes of his selected poems in translation have been published in Spain, Italy, and France. His novel *Sweetbitter* won the Anisfield-Wolf Book Award, and he has also published a book of very short fiction, *An Orchard in the Street*. Gibbons is also the author of a book on poetic technique, *How Poems Think*. He has won fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Center for Hellenic Studies, as well as the Folger Library's O. B. Hardison, Jr. prize and other honors and awards. His work has been included in Best American Poetry and Pushcart Prize anthologies. He teaches at Northwestern University, where he is a Frances Hooper Professor of Arts and Humanities.



An energetic exploration of the expanse of language translated and otherwise transformed

In *Renditions* Reginald Gibbons conducts an ensemble of poetic voices, using the works of a varied, international selection of writers as departure points for his translations and transformations. The collection poses the idea that all writing is, at least abstractly, an act of translation, whether said act “translates” observation into word or moves ideas from one language to another. Through these acts of transformation, Gibbons infuses the English language with stylistic aspects of other languages and poetic traditions. The resulting poems are imbued with a sense of homage that allows us to respectfully reimagine the borders of language and revel in the fellowship of idea sharing. In this tragicomedy of the human experience and investigation of humanity’s effects, Gibbons identifies the “shared underthoughts that we can (all) sense:” desire, love, pain, and fervor.

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6 x 9 | 116 pages

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Renditions

“If poetry is our chief means of breaking bread with the dead, as Auden suggested, then Reginald Gibbons’ *Renditions* is the best kind of feast you can imagine. Here Gibbons speaks to Mandelshtam about heaviness and tenderness, those two sisters, here he walks with Montale under the light of lemon trees, here we watch him read aloud the great dead poets in his own voice while gusts of rain platter against our glass hearts, like happiness. Why? Because Gibbons is a master of variousness, he excels in many different tonalities at once, as if each is a different tongue. Though his favorite, perhaps, is the language of nuance and delicacy, of lyric precision. So his Vallejo teaches us fire by walking, impossibly, down the same long street with a loaf of bread, for a hundred years now, and his Cernuda teaches us, tenderly, to see that what is mysterious is in fact *claritas*: ‘the way two unannounced leaves can be / proof of the world’s breath.’ This is a genuinely gorgeous, generous collection: across time and space, this one-man chorus sings the way Pasternak recommended when he whispered that poets should go across the borders, smashing those borders.”

—Ilya Kaminsky

“This collection might also be called ‘Liberties’: Reginald Gibbons has taken passionate liberties with the poems he loves, from many languages and many centuries. In a devotional ventriloquism, he throws his voice into the voices of Wang Wei, Sophocles, Pindar, Tsvetaeva, Mandelshtam, Neruda, and a host of others. Ancient themes of justice and injustice resonate through his modern forms, and the volume gathers in the final ode to an extended, eloquent, and furiously contemporary curse on a recognizable tyrant. For Reginald Gibbons, poetry is collective: he has turned his debts into song.”

—Rosanna Warren

Sister

He's one more man
lit with prison fluorescence.

The day he's released, he welcomes me,
"What took you so long?"

Tears in my mouth.
Feckless, I think.

Dressed in street clothes, he looks well enough.
My arm around him, the prodigal,

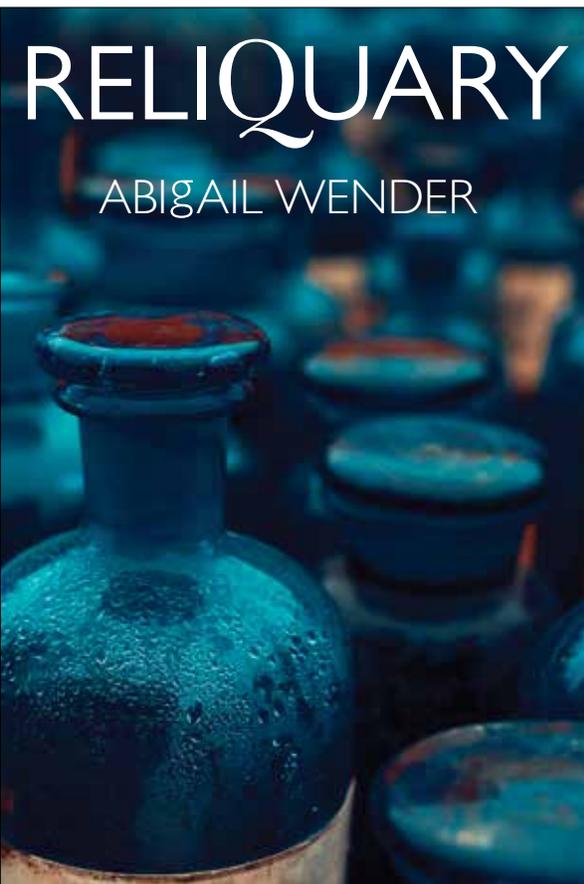
I bring him to our father's house.
Oh, I'm not so different from the bitter sibling.

author photo by Rachel Eliza Griffiths



Abigail Wender

Abigail Wender's poems and translations have been published in numerous journals. She holds a degree from the MFA Program for Writers at Warren Wilson College. *Reliquary* is her first collection of poems. She lives in New York City.



An introspective lyric on how the opiate crisis alters families and futures

In her debut collection, *Reliquary*, Abigail Wender addresses losing a brother to prison and, ultimately, opiate addiction. The text also considers womanhood, motherhood, and marriage in lyric poems that confront the complicated nature of grief, the effects of illness on family, and how love—even bliss—figure into grief’s equation. The collection suspends time, as the speaker weaves between flashbacks and the present, assembling fragments and vignettes of her childhood and marriage. In the book’s moments of solace and interiority, such as in the poem, “Hiking,” Wender contemplates how to hold on and to what. In this particular poem’s reflection on forgiveness, the speaker asks “Are there words for us, / high on an uppermost branch?” and the collection responds with a resounding *yes*.

ISBN: 978-1-945588-67-9

\$16.95 | Paper

6 x 9 | 94 pages

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Reliquary

“A reliquary is a receptacle for a holy person’s belongings—such as a scrap of clothing or a tooth. In her marvelous collection, Abigail Wender breaks open the meaning to explore varying contexts for the sacred. She finds the quotidian Timex or *pfennig*, the ritual stone lion in a cemetery, and the abstract in something like *S*. In these poems, the reader will find a keenly-felt personal landscape and, along the way, the loss of a brother as he alternately runs away, returns, and fails to stay away from death. With sadness and fury, the poet moves outward, ‘like those who hold oil lamps to light the road.’ *Reliquary* is a cause for celebration.”

—Kimiko Hahn

“‘This is a reliquary // to hold my brother’s gifts— / his sad kindness,’ says Abigail Wender in her moving, meditative debut, a book of poems whose economy and precision of thought arise and speak to us from within the particular silence of ‘two minds not making amends,’ as Wender negotiates the estrangement between herself and a brother lost to addiction, imprisonment, and their eventual, fatal effects. How to make amends with the dead? How do we extend to the dead—or indeed, receive from them—the ‘breath of forgiveness?’ The taut poems of *Reliquary* enact the open-endedness of these questions, refuse the falseness of absolute answers, and invite us to accept the fact of death while insisting that there’s still time—which is to say, they remind us, should we tip toward despair, to keep a space for hope.”

—Carl Phillips

Debris

After the storm I picked up sticks
doing what my father did
on Saturdays. I heaped them
in a shaky pile that teetered
and began to slip, kindling
for a fire to warm the afternoon.

When he'd asked me to come with him
I'd refused but watched him stoop
from the warm side of the window.
The bundle grew under his arm
as he crossed the lawn carrying
load after load to the lower

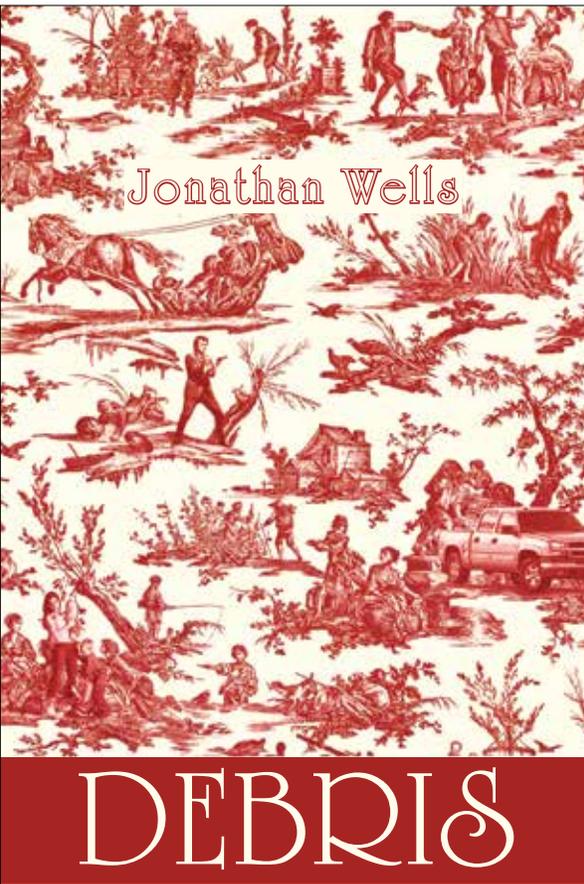
ground where he let me strike
the match in spite of my refusal.

author photo by Juliet Wells



Jonathan Wells

Jonathan Wells is the author of two previous collections of poetry with Four Way Books: *The Man with Many Pens* (2015) and *Train Dance* (2011). His poems have appeared in *The New Yorker*, *Ploughshares*, *AGNI*, *Bennington Review*, and many other journals. He is a co-editor of the New World Translation Series with Christopher Merrill and lives in New York.



Glinting vestiges of the lyric in a world rife with brutality

In *Debris* Jonathan Wells offers a stark foil between the lyric world of the poem and an outside world that is violent, hard, and relentless. While many poems of the collection work to transform this outer world through imagination, resourcefulness, and even beautification, the arc of the collection leads us to the conclusion that dire enough circumstances can render lyricism impossible. In one of the opening poems “Notes from the Invasion,” the speaker asserts “The worst has happened. There is nothing / to imagine,” and the collection as a whole asks us to consider the question: without imagination, what is left of the mind? How are we to find peace? Experience love? Wells invites us to commune in magical escapism and phenomenology of the quotidian, as well as in solemn observations of violence and suffering. Despite the collection’s thesis on the impossibility of lyricism, the poems herein are persistent remnants that honor the lyric and keep its memory alive.

ISBN: 978-1-945588-71-6

\$16.95 | Paper

6 x 9 | 72 pages

Pub Date: February 2021 | Poetry

Debris

“At a moment in history when simply breathing is fraught with social and political implications, to be inspired, that is, to breathe in, implies a new metaphysics. *Debris*, Jonathan Wells’s third poetry collection, invites us to ‘inhale the page’s fragrance and complete the scene,’ as Wells does throughout this most inspired work. And in so doing, he breathes in a rich archive of literary culture, the debris of late capitalism, the emotional debris of human relationships, and the glorious debris of lived experience. Wells makes himself vulnerable to the world to remind us that the personal is political, yes, but the political takes up residence in the body in much the way these poems do, at a cellular and most intimate level.”

—Gregory Pardlo

“The sense of timelessness one finds in Jonathan Wells’s *Debris* typically comes to us through translation, often from the position of exile, as if we require perspectives shot through the prism of another language to better see the lives we are in. As his speaker describes, ‘An unexpected story moves me / toward the window. Is it mine / or the one about how the pylons / crumbled and the planks fell.’ This book provides a mirror to the country in which we now reside, that has for so long been unrecognizable.”

—Cate Marvin

“I was seduced by the independence
of his mind”

after Bahiana by Maître Parfumeur et Gantier

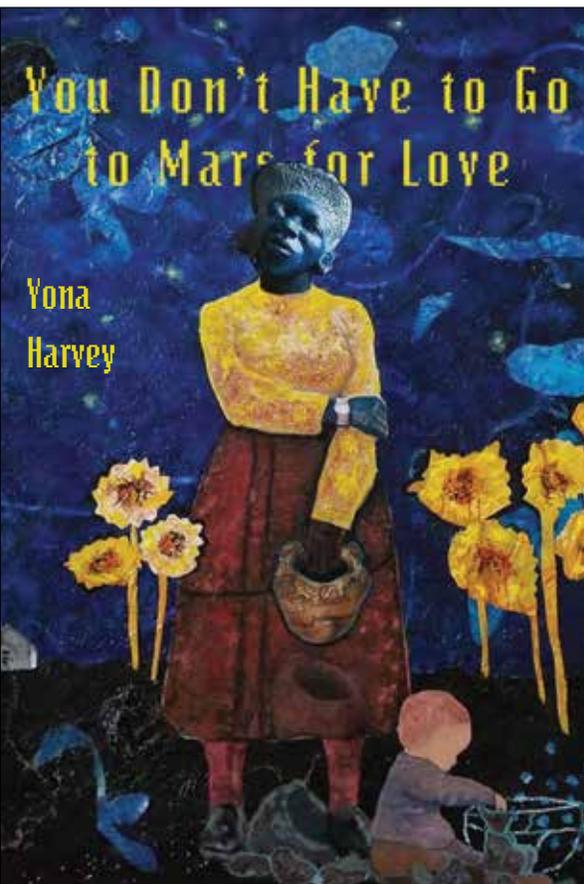
You never wear cologne. You give
& you give & you give & you give.
& they take from you. That’s their business.
You are mine. Or so you say
with a wink. I want to tell that stupid girl
to shut the hell up about the sonnet.
But you shrug. Just a girl, you say.
You once saw seabirds in her
skirt, a blue, irregular outline,
a neglected island. & anyway, cologne
is for boys who need a hint. Just don’t
tell their young lovers too soon. Give them
the feathered headdresses & coconuts they imagine,
the little trees that bear chocolate fruit.

author photo by Ua Pilar



Yona Harvey

Yona Harvey’s first poetry book, *Hemming the Water* (Four Way Books, 2013), won the Kate Tufts Discovery Award from Claremont Graduate University. She is among the first black women writers for Marvel Comics and earned an Eisner Award for her contribution to *World of Wakanda*. She co-authored *Black Panther and The Crew* with Ta-Nehisi Coates. She is a graduate of Howard University and earned her MFA from the Ohio State University and a Masters of Library and Information Science from the University of Pittsburgh where she is also an associate professor. She is the recipient of the Carol R. Brown Achievement Award from the Heinz Foundation and winner of the inaugural Lucille Clifton Legacy Award in poetry from St. Mary’s College of Maryland. She facilitates creative writing workshops, delivers writing-specific speaker topics, and currently serves on the editorial board of *Poetry Daily*.



“there were no street signs or landmarks
just the dark stretching”

The poems of award-winning poet Yona Harvey’s much anticipated *You Don’t Have to Go to Mars for Love* follow an unnamed protagonist on her multidimensional, Afro-futuristic journey. Her story stretches the boundaries normally constraining a black, female body like hers. Half-superhero, half-secret-identity, she encounters side-slipping, speculative realities testing her in poems that appear like the panels of a comic book. Music directs readers through large and small emotional arcs, constantly re-troubled by lyric experimentation. Harvey layers her poems with a chorus of women’s voices. Her artful use of refrain emphasizes the protagonist’s meaning making and doubling back: “Who am I to say? The eye is often mistaken. Or is it the mind? Always eager to interpret.” Our hero is captured, escapes, scuba dives, goes interstellar, and she emerges on the other end of her journey renewed, invoking the gods: “taunt the sharks. & when the glaciers get to melting, / all God’s River’s we shall haunt.”

ISBN: 978-1-945588-56-3

\$16.95 | Paper

6 x 9 | 88 pages

Pub Date: September 2020 | Poetry

You Don't Have to Go to Mars for Love

“Harvey explores in her striking latest the relationship between freedom, social justice, and the lyric imagination. Spanning a variety of literary forms, from prose poems and lyric fragments to sonnets, the work in this frequently gorgeous collection is unified by its concern with cultivating and articulating a collective consciousness. . . . Readers will be captivated by Harvey’s voice and vision.”

—*Publishers Weekly*

“In the center of wisdom made from crushing rocks against boulders, Harvey’s brilliant lyric lives in the resistance of black women whose presence on this soil is now in its fifth century. In *You Don’t Have to Go to Mars for Love* Yona Harvey shows how an original poetic lives in the marrow of the immortal bones of ancestry. The events of her life have moved the poet to write fiercely of her children and of loss, as well as the failures of the country where she was born. When the poet speaks to the soul sickness of men and of America it is with the generational wealth that is her inheritance, a wisdom that is the greater galactic mass to balance the more recent visions of black immigrants. Her voice is essential to making a cultural wholeness that would otherwise be impossible. This lyric, this unique, multimedia gift is evidence of an awakening only a few poets ever approach, an awakening that is the reward for an unfaltering belief in love’s profound nature.”

—Afaa M. Weaver 尉雅風

from *I Give You My Heart Os doy mi corazón*

I find myself on my feet with fifteen leaves.
Everything carries its own light on the walls.

I woke up to slaughter, my heart opening
to cemeteries of moon—

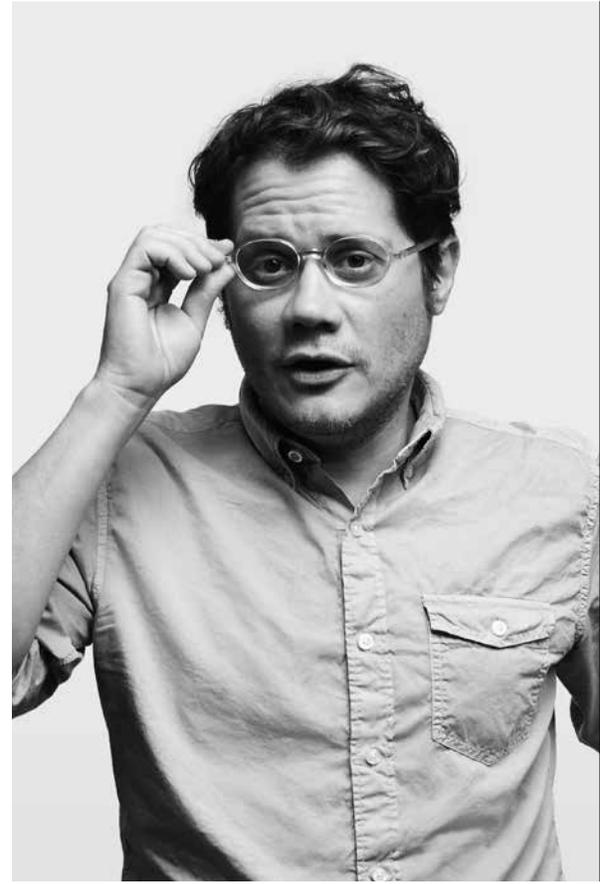
the parasites, the drizzle. The mud crowning
the undergrowth with immense sadness.

Me encuentro de pie con quince hojas.
Brilla todo en los muros.

Desperté en su sacrificio: mi corazón se abría
entre cementerios de luna—

los parásitos, la llovizna. El lodo coronando
la maleza con mustios grandes.

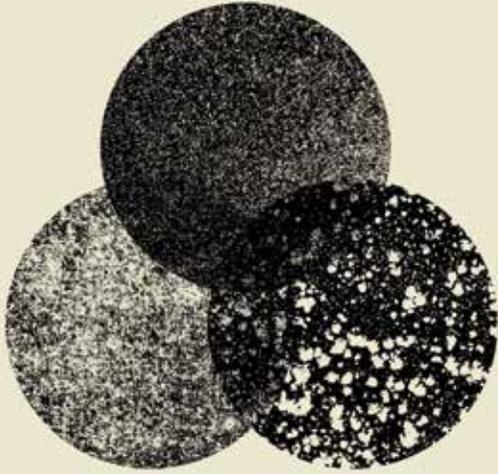
author photo by Eric McNatt



Ricardo Alberto Maldonado

Ricardo Alberto Maldonado was born and raised in Puerto Rico. He is the co-editor of *Puerto Rico en mi corazón* and the recipient of fellowships from CantoMundo, the New York Foundation for the Arts and Queer|Arts|Mentorship. He lives in New York, where he serves as managing director at 92Y's Unterberg Poetry Center.

THE LIFE ASSIGNMENT



RICARDO ALBERTO MALDONADO

“Our theater confused the gods.
Su teatro confundió a los dioses.”

The speaker of the poems in *The Life Assignment* is reviewing his history. As if sorting through a box of photographs, the speaker sorts through relationships, trying to discern what was healthy from what was exploitative. Concepts of love are turned over and over in these poems: romantic love, love of family, love of country, self-love (or lack thereof). Often the speaker finds that what at first appeared to be caring, was insincere all along. When tenderness is in short supply, how can one protect himself? How can one find home? In his debut collection, Ricardo Alberto Maldonado bends poems through bilingual lyrics that present spartan observation as evidence for its exacting verdict: “We never leave when life is elsewhere. The clemency of men disappears / as does the light, tarring the roofs.” An electric debut collection.

ISBN: 978-1-945588-54-9

\$16.95 | Paper

6 x 9 | 80 pages

Pub Date: September 2020 | Poetry

The Life Assignment

“In this quietly furious bilingual debut, Maldonado challenges the entanglements of power, queer love, money, and language against the backdrop of a post-hurricane Puerto Rico and a life of daily labor in New York City. . . .”
—*Publishers Weekly*, starred review

“[A] collection whose devastating precision is only matched by its capacity to rebuild tenderness from the ashes.”
—Raquel Salas Rivera

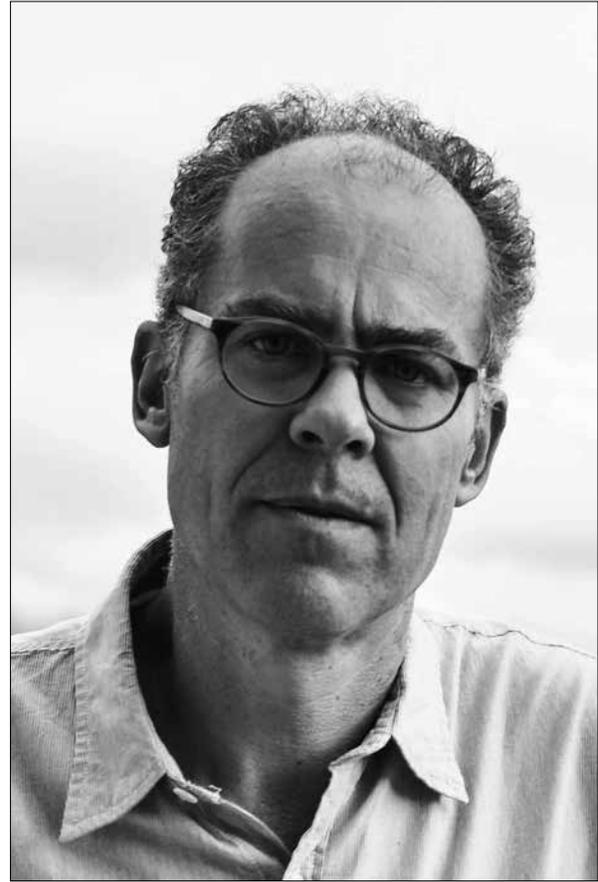
“. . . Complex and unblinking, with heaps of sorrow and grace, Maldonado has a knack for the impossible, and for making his readers look headlong into it until we all come out the other side more compassionate and honest.”
—Lynn Melnick

“*The Life Assignment* is, in its own startling terms, an ecology of late capitalist grief. . . . This outstanding first book, merciless in its beauty and wit, is a ‘schema for our lapsed world,’ a way to make sense of our ‘somber city’ and ‘the grief / we happen to be around.’”
—Urayoán Noel

Last Advice

The night before my father died
I dreamed he was back home,
and I in my old room
on the third floor, and he
was calling up to me
from the bottom of the stairs
some advice I couldn't hear
or recall the next day when,
standing over him
back in the ICU
full of the chirping of machines
we had decided to unplug,
I remembered the dream
and heard him call my name.

author photo by Ale Vulcano



Jeffrey Harrison

Jeffrey Harrison is the author of six previous books of poetry: *The Singing Underneath*, selected by James Merrill for the National Poetry Series in 1987; *Signs of Arrival*; *Feeding the Fire*, winner of the Sheila Motton Award from the New England Poetry Club in 2002; *The Names of Things*, a volume of selected early poems; *Incomplete Knowledge* (2006), with Four Way Books, runner-up for the Poets' Prize in 2008; and *Into Daylight*, winner of the Dorset Prize, and selected by the Massachusetts Center for the Book as a Must-Read Book for 2015. He has received fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Bogliasco Foundation, among other honors. His poems have appeared widely in magazines and journals, as well as in *Best American Poetry*, *The Pushcart Prize Anthology*, *Poets of the New Century*, *The Twentieth Century in Poetry*, and other anthologies, and been featured regularly on *The Writer's Almanac*, *American Life in Poetry*, *Poetry Daily*, and other online or media venues. He lives in Massachusetts.

Between Lakes



Jeffrey Harrison

“each of us in our own pod
of selfhood floating on the fetid, primordial cove”

How does consciousness inhabit liminal spaces? In Jeffrey Harrison’s *Between Lakes*, the death of the speaker’s father places him in the ever-shifting zone between the living and the dead while also sending him back into his journey to manhood. Old arguments are reimaged: What does it mean to be a man? What does it mean to be a participant in one’s life as well as a witness and recorder of the lives of others? The exploration of these questions leads to new discoveries, including the way time reshapes the vision of one’s life and alters relationships, remaking a shared history. Harrison refrains from explanation, instead offering detail after trustworthy detail—less to prove a case than to imagine a life true to the original. Whether observing nature with steadfast precision or sensing the presence of his absent father while doing chores, Harrison sings the songs of experience in late middle life.

ISBN: 978-1-945588-53-2

\$16.95 | Paper

6 x 9 | 150 pages

Pub Date: September 2020 | Poetry

Between Lakes

“Jeffrey Harrison’s deceptive, beautifully made, uncanny new poems have a calm surface and a roiling undertow. How quietly and obsessively he probes and captures those singular moments—fragile, vanishing, too blue to last—that deepen into the unknown. That’s why I consider him a true heir to Elizabeth Bishop, his favorite poet.”

—Edward Hirsch

“How refreshing to read whole poems about a whole life in which true dark is illuminated. Narrative is too easy a word for what Harrison does: he’s a poet who follows through, who allows the arc of an experience to find its own landing point. The writing has that quality of being at one with the experience; no pushy hype or muscle-show, just the lean moment dealt with and, by implication, enlarged.”

—Stanley Plumly

Night Sky

At his birth, I held my son against stars,
charted the climb, his flag among stars.

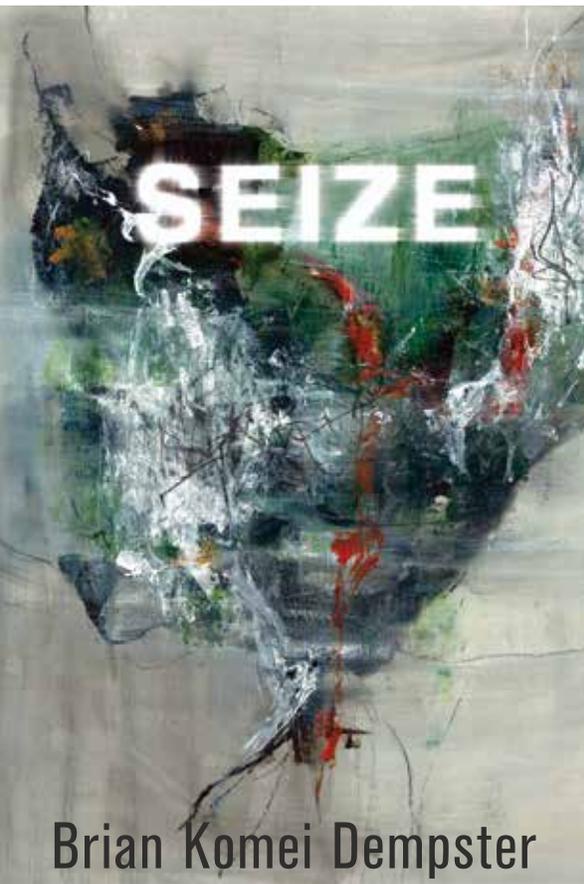
A jagged pulse shook our space—
his mind, a blizzard of stars.

I keep it quiet, how he sees earth
crooked, his words, buried stars.



Brian Komei Dempster

Brian Komei Dempster's debut book of poetry, *Topaz* (Four Way Books, 2013), received the 15 Bytes 2014 Book Award in Poetry. His poems have been published widely in journals such as *New England Review*, *North American Review*, *Ploughshares*, and *TriQuarterly*, along with various anthologies, including *Language for a New Century: Contemporary Poetry from the Middle East, Asia, and Beyond* (Norton, 2008) and *Asian American Poetry: The Next Generation* (University of Illinois, 2004). He is editor of *From Our Side of the Fence: Growing Up in America's Concentration Camps* (Kearny Street Workshop, 2001), which received a 2007 Nisei Voices Award from the National Japanese American Historical Society, and *Making Home from War: Stories of Japanese American Exile and Resettlement* (Heyday, 2011). His work—as a poet, workshop instructor, and editor—has been recognized by grants from the Arts Foundation of Michigan and the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs, the California State Library's California Civil Liberties Publication Education Program, the Center for Cultural Innovation, and the San Francisco Arts Commission. Dempster has also received scholarships to the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference. He is a professor of rhetoric and language at the University of San Francisco, where he serves as Director of Administration for the Master of Arts in Asia Pacific Studies program.



“I keep him
from falling, keep him
from flying.”

Seize, Brian Komei Dempster’s follow-up to *Topaz*, spares no one the highs and lows of fatherhood. The speaker struggles to care for his young and ailing child—a child whose many medical problems create an obstacle course of moral and emotional dilemmas. How does a father come to terms with the large and unknowable mysteries of a child who cannot communicate in a “normative” way? How does a parent—especially one who is dependent on language—guide a child without the use of speech? And how does one become the parent of another when their own uncertainties, their own wounds—intergenerationally from war, from strained race relations, from constantly being denied a place to belong—are still healing?

ISBN: 978-1-945588-51-8

\$16.95 | Paper

6 x 9 | 152 pages

Pub Date: September 2020 | Poetry

Seize

“Brian Komei Dempster’s central subject—his son’s epilepsy—could not be more freighted with risk, and yet *Seize* achieves a pitch-perfect harmony of lament and praise, suffering and solace. At its heart is the child Brendan—‘his head, a sunflower / too heavy / on its stem’—and a father’s searingly honest account of what it means to love him, ‘A gold knot / of shadow and light.’ This is a stunning, heartbreaker of a book.”

—Patrick Phillips

“The human body, simultaneously an instance of a promise and the site of trauma and a promise broken, is the boundless occasion of these rich and engaging poems. I love most about them the music of thinking in images, how it encompasses feeling and singing, ranging from the raw and open to the exquisite and philosophical. There is so much yearning in these poems, and so much rejoicing, and wondering out loud about the meaning of our time on earth, especially in the face of pain and suffering.”

—Li-Young Lee

*What the Dying Said to Me in the Dream
Where I Became the Dying*

I hope heaven is like Texas in the fifties,
right down to all the petty bribes.
When my first love died,
all year my hands smelled of gasoline.
Each day's new pall of snow
burned back to swarming blacktop gray.
Grief, I determined, is most constructive
when you channel it through scorn.
When my second love died I started painting birds.
After fifteen years of studies my hands flitted like two wings.
I've flown this state so many times
and found nothing lustrous here.
Nothing but grief in circulation.
No matter what, don't bury me in Michigan.

author photo by Matthew Wester



Charlie Clark

Charlie Clark's poetry has appeared in *New England Review*, *Ploughshares*, *Threepenny Review*, and other journals. He studied poetry at the University of Maryland. He has received scholarships from the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference and was a 2019 NEA fellow in poetry. He lives in Austin, TX.

The Newest Employee of the
MUSEUM OF RUIN

Charlie Clark

“My wife’s hands invented the word abode.”

In *The Newest Employee of the Museum of Ruin*, poet Charlie Clark interrogates masculinity, the pastoral, the lasting inheritance of one’s lineage, and the mysterious every day. His speaker, ever aware of impending ruin, experiences a landscape colored by anxiety. But his speaker is also self-aware, curious and trying to refrain from too much self-judgement: “I am sorry / for this cruel wish, but I want my life to outlast / bitterness.” The speaker turns over and over the materials of culture, asking what pleasure it creates, replicates, diminishes, or destroys. When the tension runs too high, the poet creates moments of relief: “Suffering is not a philosophy any more than rain is.” Readers follow a speaker searching for ways to enjoy living within a damaged and declining world. Rich in image and wide-eyed, the beautiful, the plain, the ugly coexist in a debut collection fifteen years in the making.

ISBN: 978-1-945588-52-5

\$16.95 | Paper

6 x 9 | 72 pages

Pub Date: September 2020 | Poetry

The Newest Employee of the Museum of Ruin

“As I read *The Newest Employee of the Museum of Ruin*, Charlie Clark’s eagerly awaited debut collection, I kept recalling Osip Mandelstam’s assertion that ‘image is the moment of conviction.’ These poems affix flashes of surprising insight to everyday image in such a way that they become transcendent markers of a life lived AND recorded with a deliberate and detail-oriented consciousness. These poems are wry, knowing, beautifully sculpted. These poems invite us in for warm and smart conversations that could go on forever. ‘Turns out the biggest risk is living,’ writes Clark, reminding us that regarding the world with patience and precision is as much about taking a chance on love, as it is about taking our time.”

—Tarfia Faizullah

“Charlie Clark’s remarkable *The Newest Employee of the Museum of Ruin* is a book so full of ‘fresh, blunt wonder’ and ‘compilations’ of delicious noticings, of energetic reports, so full of the passion, movement, and invention Berryman required of poetry that I felt as if I truly was experiencing the world in a new way. Clark’s idiom is dexterously off-kilter, his images rich and brightly focused, and his ear pitched precisely to the way we think as well as hear. But perhaps what I admire most about Clark’s museum of ruin is its vast inventory of affection which he’s created out of a rare and infectious love of the world, a world in which he asks ‘Gentle, brightness’ to burn him ‘into singing.’”

—Michael Collier

from *We Were Lucky with the Rain*

Lacey can't resist spying on her parents when they fight. Which happens whenever her mother has disappeared for a few hours or, occasionally, the entire evening. She lies flat on the wooden floor of their upstairs hallway, peering through the banister at her parents yelling at each other in the living room below.

Her father wants to know where her mother has been and why she didn't pick up Lacey from her piano lesson this afternoon, or her younger sister, Eileen, after school.

"I told you this morning that I was going to this Mom lunch thing at Hoolihan's. So I was late, okay?" Lacey's mother throws her purse onto the floor. Only her legs are visible, jutting out from underneath a red dress, roaming around the living room. She bumps into the coffee table, left ankle buckling.

"You weren't late, you didn't show up. You didn't answer your phone. We had no idea where you were. And now you're a complete mess." Her father's voice goes up an octave. "You could have killed someone, you know."

Her mother starts laughing. "Jesus, relax. I took a cab."

"Then where is the car, goddamn it?"

If Lacey tilts her head a certain way, she can see her father's slippers pacing back and forth. She strokes her fraying rope bracelet that she got at her school's Fall Festival. Her fingers always work their way to its soft underside whenever she's waiting for her turn to bat for her softball team or perform in a piano recital.

"The car is fine, alright?" her mother says. "I left it in the parking lot at that Star Market by Hoolihan's. You know, the one in Tremont Square."

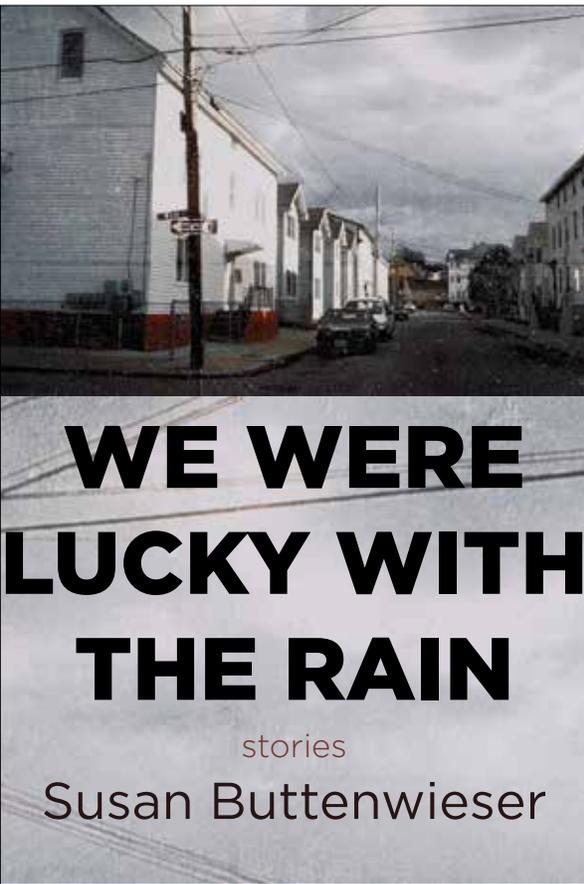
"It's not *fine*. It won't be *fine*. You can't leave the car there overnight. It's going to get towed!" Her father's slippers stop moving. Then he stomps his left foot on the floor and throws a sofa cushion out into the hallway. A table lamp crashes to the floor and her mother shouts at him to *Stop it, just stop it*.

Lacey can't understand how Eileen always sleeps through their parents' arguments, which often involve things being broken. A few weeks ago, her mother hurled a bottle of red wine against the front door. Another time it was plates. She's also thrown glasses, shoes, and once a dining room chair. But her father always cleans it all up, and in the morning, there is never a trace of the mess, not even one thing out of place anywhere.



Susan Bittenwieser

Susan Bittenwieser's writing has appeared in numerous publications. *We Were Lucky with the Rain* is her first book. She teaches creative writing in New York City public schools and to incarcerated women.



“Her father’s voice goes up an octave. ‘You could have killed someone, you know.’”

The characters inhabiting Susan Buttenwieser’s debut story collection *We Were Lucky with the Rain* stand at the margin of society, often perched on the knife’s edge of economic disaster. Her characters cope with emotional and physical isolation as they try to build, keep, or renew family structures. An older brother drops out of college and tries to keep his youngest sister from ending up like the rest of the family. A father shields his daughters from their mother’s erratic behavior, while his daughters struggle to understand their anxiety and anger. An uncle copes with his helplessness to protect his nephew. No quick fixes, no miracle cures await the people within these stories. This is fiction devoted to realism. And Buttenwieser’s compassionate narrators refuses to look away during their most vulnerable trials. A remarkable debut collection.

ISBN: 978-1-945588-55-6

\$19.95 | Paper

6 x 9 | 134 pages

Pub Date: September 2020 | Fiction

We Were Lucky with the Rain

Featured in *Poets & Writers* 5 over 50: 2020

“... Buttenwieser’s sketches are more like pathology slides of the human condition than snapshots of happy family picnics.”

—*Kirkus Reviews*

“Unsettling things happen in Susan Buttenwieser’s debut collection, *We Were Lucky with the Rain*. A website content monitor stalks a suburban housewife and her daughters. A teenager loses track of her kid sister while escaped convicts are on the loose. A family eats its last supper before the father begins a prison sentence. A motel housekeeper’s coworker does—or doesn’t—discover a gun, a backpack full of money, and half a finger in a closet. But despite the sometimes-dark premises, this is a collection full of light and hope, where grace arrives in tender moments of unexpected kindness, all of it rendered in quiet, pitch-perfect prose. *We Were Lucky with the Rain* left me feeling lucky to have discovered Buttenwieser’s luminous fictional voice.”

—Will Allison

“Susan Buttenwieser’s stories are sharp, funny, surprising, and immensely satisfying. They’re also a little bit wince-inducing because she’s able (and willing) to expose the emotional and behavioral underbelly of her characters, and her characters are you and me. I would follow this writer anywhere.”

—Patrick Ryan

Fantasia for the Man in Blue

by Tommye Blount

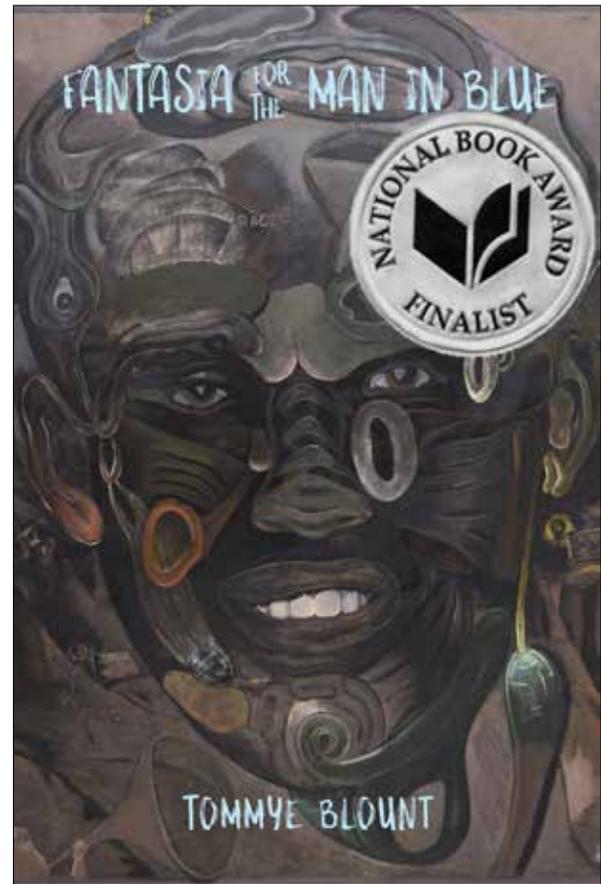
Finalist for the 2020 National Book Award in Poetry, received a starred review in *Booklist*, received a starred review in *Publishers Weekly*

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Pub Date: March 2020 | Poetry



Upkeep by Sara London

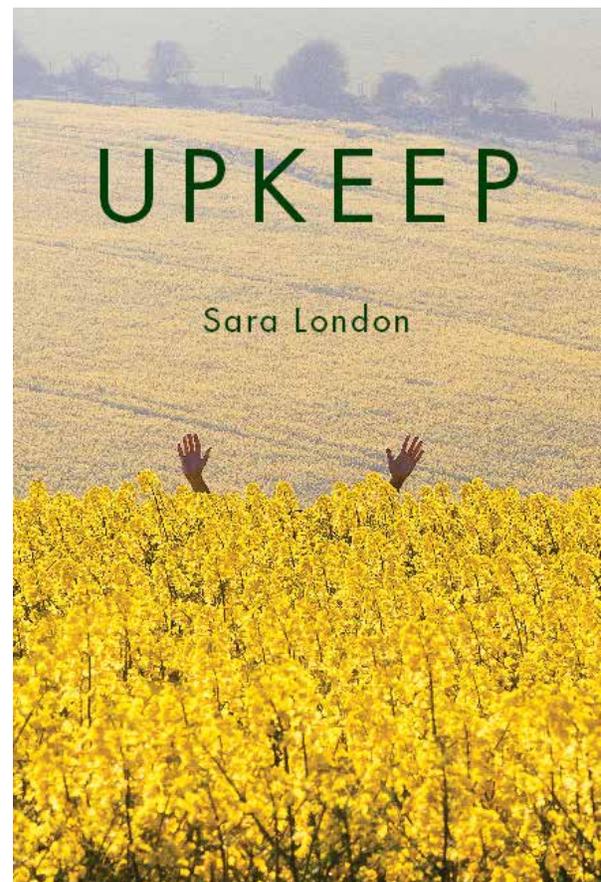
Winner of the Sheila Margaret Motton Book Prize, selected by the New England Poetry Club Board

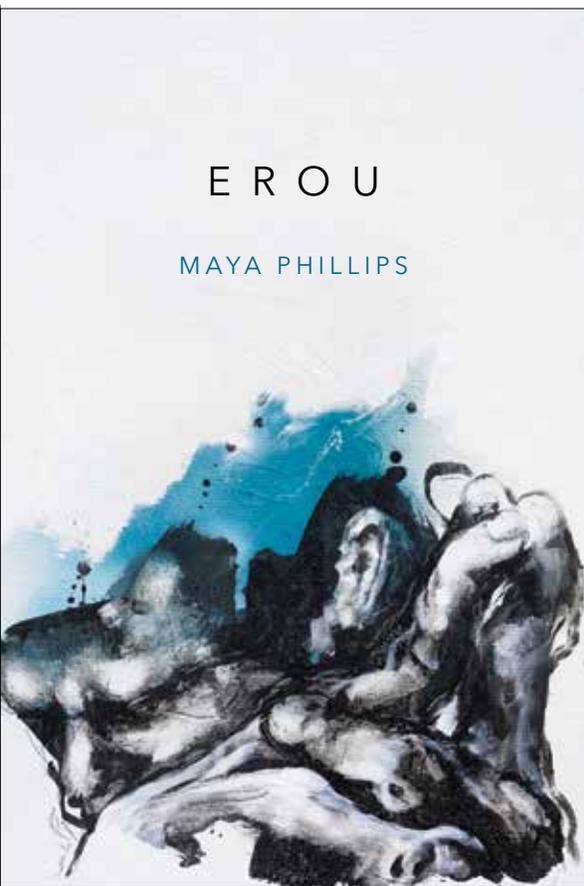
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\$16.95 | Paper

6 x 9 | 112 pages

Pub Date: September 2019 | Poetry





Erou by Maya Phillips

Winner of the 2019 Balcones Poetry Prize and the 2020 Poetry by the Sea First Book Award, Award Finalist for the PEN Open Book Award, “Ode to My Father’s Failed Heart” was selected by Rita Dove for her poetry column in the *New York Times Magazine*

“... The difficult, perhaps selfish, repeatedly mourned dead father in ‘Erou’ competes with and sometimes merges into Phillips’s scenes from Greek mythology (‘Hades, Hosting’; ‘Persephone, Rising’), whose stark tableaux can echo those of Louise Glück. . . .”

—Stephanie Burt, *The New York Times Book Review*

ISBN 978-1-945588-38-9

\$15.95 | Paper

6 x 9 | 124 pages

Pub Date: September 2019 | Poetry



Kontemporary Amerikan Poetry by John Murillo

Reviewed / Featured in *Publishers Weekly* (starred review), *Library Journal*, *NPR*, *LitHub*, *Booklist*, *Poets & Writers*, and *The Rumpus*

“Applause and wonder to this distinctive, many-minded work.”
—Robert Pinsky, in *Ploughshares*

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Pub Date: March 2020 | Poetry

Nightshade by Andrea Cohen

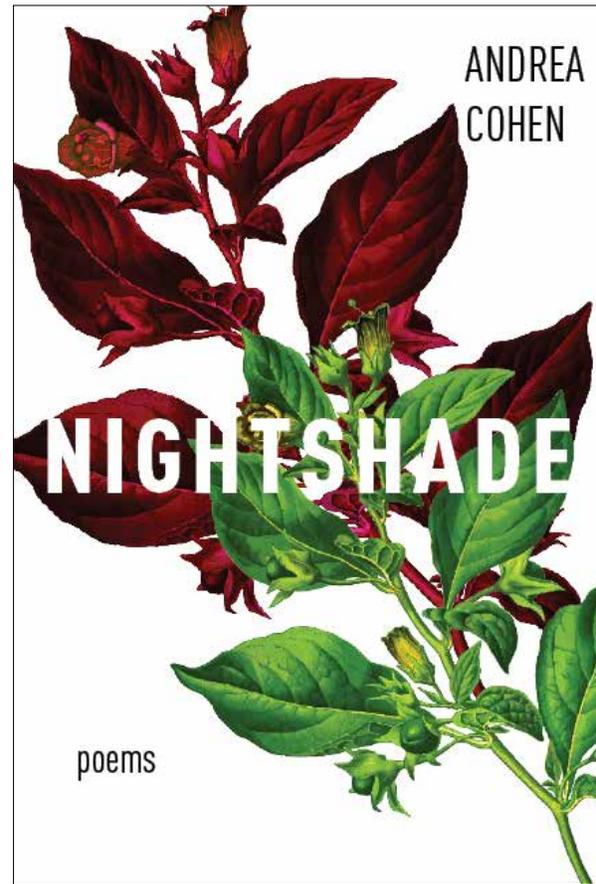
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Featured on “The Best Poetry Boston Gave Us in 2019” list for *WBUR*
Featured in *Poets & Writers’* Literary MagNet section in their September / October 2019 issue

ISBN: 978-1-945588-35-8

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Pub Date: September 2019 | Poetry



Company by Sam Ross

Winner of the Four Way Books Levis Prize in Poetry selected by Carl Phillips
Winner of The Publishing Triangle’s Thom Gunn Award for Gay Poetry

“... Sam Ross is an important poet because he writes of important matters: the life and death of kindness, survival under attack, the exquisite price of humanness. . . .”

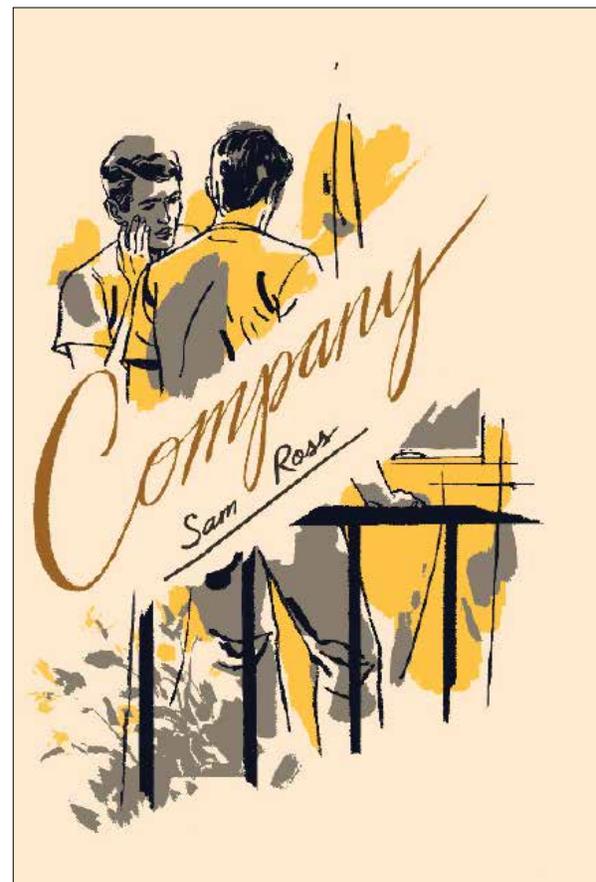
—Grace Cavalieri for *Washington Independent Review of Books*

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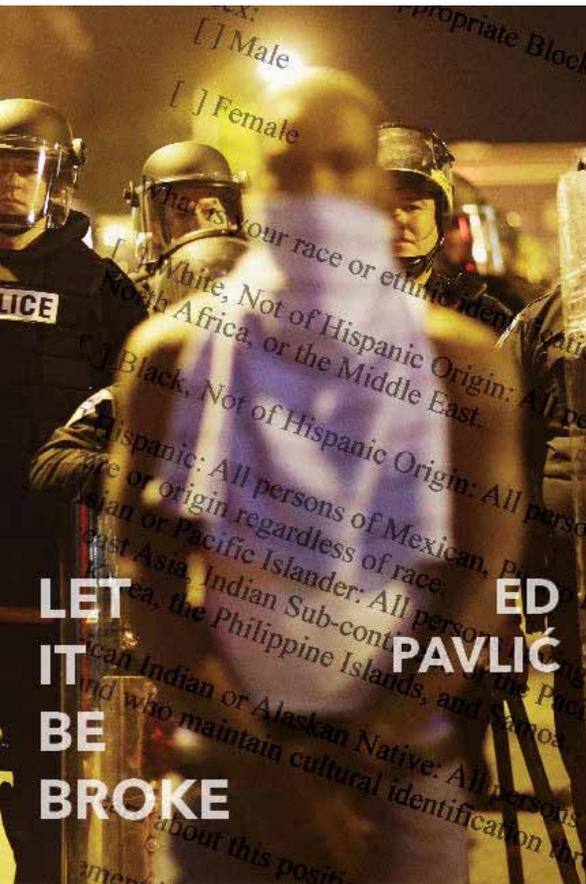
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**RECENTLY PUBLISHED &
NOTEWORTHY**



Let It Be Broke by Ed Pavlić

Reviewed / Featured in *Publishers Weekly* (starred review) and *Library Journal*

“This book bridges intellect and ecstasy, miracle and disaster, Rukeyser and Rihanna. It’s powered by some wondrous concoction of language, politics, and blood. Ed Pavlić is doing what he’s always done. His poems sing with the scale of a Homeric epic; they drift with the existential perceptions of a Joyce novel; they argue with the fever and fight of a Baldwin essay. *Let It Be Broke* delves, demands, and delights.”

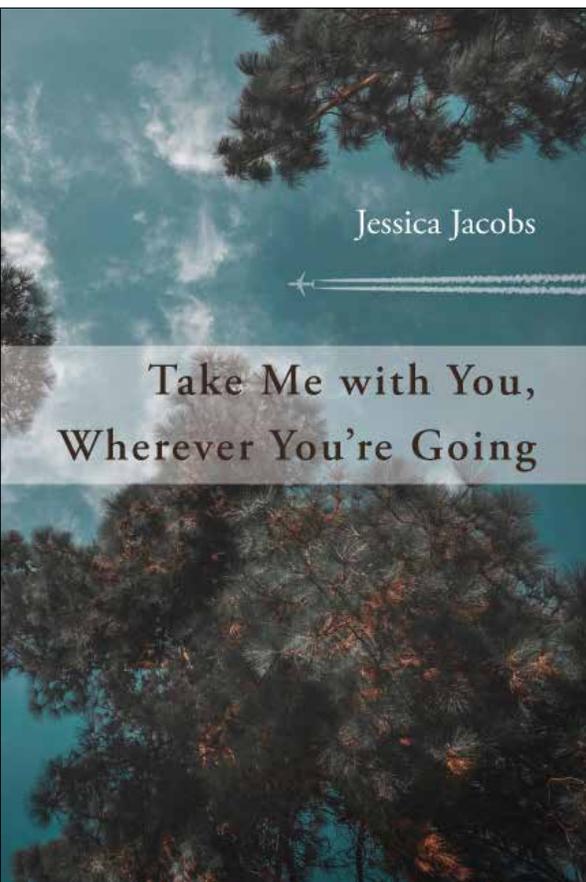
—Terrance Hayes

ISBN: 978-1-945588-45-7

\$16.95 | Paper

6 x 9 | 134 pages

Pub Date: March 2020 | Poetry



Take Me with You, Wherever You're Going by Jessica Jacobs

Winner of the Goldie Award in Poetry from the Golden Crown Literary Society, the Devil’s Kitchen Reading Award in Poetry, *Library Journal’s* Best Poetry 2019 list

“In language limpid, forthright, and involving, Jacobs relates the story of a life: growing up different in swampy Florida; discovering one’s sexuality and self; learning that finding and sustaining real love is both wondrous and hard. Her voice is immediately captivating and remarkably variable. . . .”

—*Library Journal*

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Pub Date: March 2019 | Poetry

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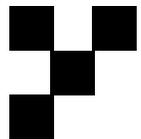
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