

SUGAR
HOUSE
REVIEW



#14

FALL/WINTER '16



POETRY

SUGAR HOUSE REVIEW

AN INDEPENDENT POETRY MAGAZINE

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I WANT A STRANGER WORLD

I want a stranger world
than the one I'm forced to live in

I want wild coincidences
and things that enter the atmosphere

in the year 1779
phantom battalions of soldiers

firing phantom bullets
from phantom rifles that rip

through phantom limbs
small stones that disappear

and reappear at random intervals
the moon just a few miles away

waiting to be breached
by hot air balloon

miniature graves in miniature
cemeteries containing miniature remains

unrelated elements that become
related by absolute force of will

TRANSCENDING DÉJÀ VU

Buddha sheds his skin now: the stuff
falls, packing foam pellets sloughing from
a parcel—like any other. The plaster

shell gone, kaleidoscopic bald underbelly.
The stream, a looking glass. He laughs

Who is this? The dragonfly baffled
in the sound, airless translucent wing
image, a mirage over desert asphalt, a name

echoed grown hollow. Déjà vu. The forest
depths, the Bodhi tree cutting drawn by

the nun Sanghamitta, carried to Sri Lanka.
Ancient, while its genesis endures samsara.
Imagine the package, the wrapping shroud,

the shoot of twig. Like any other. She, the daughter
of King Asoka, entrusted. A calling—preservation.

Her hands, the folded robe across her lap. When the
dragonfly lands, the still water. Buddha scatters
epidermis & rhytidome: the man & the tree.

TWO SIDES OF THE SAME

Oglala—the sound of it like a punch to the gut
then a song. Crazy Horse was thirty-six
when he died. When he opened
his eyes on the other side I want to believe
he was hungry again, the old, meddling
ache lifting him up, the fruit of the dark
and the light so much like water.

We rise from a sleep like water. In the kitchen,
the fruit flies are still there, though I threw out
the fruit two days ago. At breakfast
they sail past our faces. They've camped
in the vase of roses to say *We have infinite houses*
We're not going away.

Sioux. Say it, the oo curving your lips
in amazement. In the Moon of Making Fat
the elderberries swelled and the colts ate a world
of grass. When the moon rose, the milk of it spilled
onto this world's fields and the next world's
pines. Crazy Horse could see both
without closing his eyes.

In the new basement, I'm confused:
the pull chain changed to a switch, and hallways
where there used to be doors. I once walked
through walls. Only the light is the same.
When the white dust settles
from the sheetrock and I walk in my socks
to the storage for another box of cereal,
ghost prints follow me back. They hang
around for days. They're all over
the house, like evidence of guests
we live with and don't see.
And in the old fruit room under the stairs
the empty jars wait
to be filled and refilled.

OPENING OR CLOSING SCENE

His heart pierced three times in the rain.
The rain one color, like a motive.
The pewter swords pinning his heart to sky
like a red, odd-shaped zeppelin,
a cocktail cherry without the party noise, the amber sea
inside a crystal glass.

Had a lover done it, it would bleed.
Had a stranger done it, it would bleed.
Had God done it, it would flame on the outside
an inch from his chest, making
a relic of his clothes.

Had it been him, and it was him,
it would hover like this, a thousand feet now
in air, a test of wind, conductor of lightning,
untouchable planet, his fingerprints
all over the crime.

UNTIL JUST SECONDS AGO, IF I MISSPOKE

Until just seconds ago, if I misspoke
And if I now stand corrected, or
An understanding finally of rain, as

If all the many deaths were the hailstones
That hit the olive trees last June, a histogram
Of death, a moment between stet and

Everyone else in a hurry, someone's
Clamor trumping someone else's clamor,
The clumsiness of something as simple

As night fall, into a day not unbroken,
And if it's a sleep we can't speak
About, the gnat clouds that try to lose

Their g's, or to say the t in hatch, or would
That be a blot on one's escutcheon, a drip
Of fresh red paint on the architrave, what

Warning, what bells rang in the shtetls, and
If we all are a bad batch, proof of the existence
Of bad gods, the kind that glitch, the kind

That botch, and us, apostatic and eldritch,
Seeing more glass through the glass, an armistice
Only for an instant, wet and worried and worn.

Until nearly daybreak night fell; steed, stud, arrest, instant, understand, static,
prostitute, insist, ecstasy, system; stage, stance, stanch, stanchion, stanza, stet,
circumstance, constant, cost, distant, extant, oust, restharrow; stalag, shtetl, apostasy,
switcheroo, bedstead, armistice (arm-stopping), solstice (sun-stopping); epistyle,
architrave; steer, stern; apostrophe; Pär Fabian Lagerkvist, Nobel Prize 1951

UNTIL NEARLY TEN YEARS AFTER I EXITED ROANOKE

Until nearly ten years after I exited Roanoke
Did I hear about karaoke, the machine made
Without words, the empty orchestra pit

We can all fall in from time to time, as if
A prison sentence were so grammatically different,
As if nouns had their followings of verbs, or

Their acolytes of adjectives, if we could all
Awaken one day in a field of artichokes (*carciofi*),
Some in blue feathery flower, and Frances may

Dream tonight of the Okefenokee, the backstroke,
Or a Bangkok in which she has not yet been, and
Although some of us understand the in-joke, and

Others of us have seen Elvis sing “Poke Salad Annie”
And have wondered about her mother on the chain
Gang, chain-smoking near the Cherokee rose, that

The Brooks Range is named after neither Gwendolyn
Nor Van Wyck, that we will not brook every argument
For the existence of a God, that I personally have

Not made it to Ocracoke Island, nor played hooky since
High school, that even though I have awakened lip
Syncing something to which I too do not know the words.

Awoke amok, Béla Bartók; bazooka, bespeak, bespoken; Białystok; blue books, black
books; bok choy; bookmobile; bookoo; book, bark, beech tree; when a horse has the
heaves; choke chain, choker; tough cookie; crocus sack, crooker sack, gunnysack;
Domesday Book; gadzooks, God’s hooks (nails); Vladimir Nabokov; Leopold
Stokowski; Elwyn Brooks White; Booker Tagliaferro Washington

PARABLE OF THE NOMADS

But what of the smoke? the branches? the sparrow says.

Go ahead, the chipmunk replies.

As far as the sparrow can see
the brambles of almost-spring are
crowded by fog. Which is to see not far.

Move with care, calls back the chipmunk.
Enough to see ahead and too fast to look back.

Already, from the ground.

Not yet, from the air.

As far as I can tell the two are not saying exactly this.
Might have no way of saying such things.

Just another parable.

The neighborhood animals.
What I've just made them say.

They should tell it to me good,
the two of them together,

*mouth*ing, *these are your feet*, *this is the ground*,
what you hear is the two of them meeting.

AFTER READING ÁLVAR NÚÑEZ CABEZA DE VACA'S NARRATIVE OF THE NARVÁEZ EXPEDITION

I believe the arrows, incense, bones, blood. That the weather killed more Spaniards than the arrows could find. The four men considered God, and what the King might say if they were ever found alive. *Has he lost his other eye* and *In God's name how*. Or if their bodies were sewn into canvas and piled on the quarterdeck. Which ship would he send for them, its cannons tilting towards the gun port windows. De Vaca, Castillo, Dorantes, Estevanico. And then I think of how they continued to get by with their bodies. Their gesturing for corn, husked ear gilded. Stones and dandelions in the field have their virtues. I believe they ate the horses. What I don't know is how repeating *ave maria ave maria ave* made them curers, how the stitches on the wounded disappeared with flourishes of smoke. All he had was clothing, and then not even that. How did de Vaca remember the villages? *Cuayos, Avavares, Charruco, Mendica*. Before explorer was the new conqueror. Before there were shiploads more slaves than Estevanico. More than the Indian women traded to enemies as wives. Before there was me believing the arrows, the hiss I want them to have made as they broke through the clearings between the trees.

I AM NO CORDELIA

Tigers, not daughters, what we have perform'd
is this. Our father was no Lear, no proud king
come with a map in hand and a blessing.
He tore our country to shreds in half the time
it took Lear's shadow to be born and spent
the rest of his life in faltered mending. Scars
our crowns; doubt our dowries. We clawed
at sister-throats and built three new worlds;
we kept a wary distance. When he fell,
milk livr-d man made mad by faulty cells
and daughters not apt to *forget and forgive*,
only one of us stepped forward to shed
her nails and fangs, to serve with a gentle hand.
Not that daughter, I am wedded to my wilder stand.

**Note: Italics are from King Lear, Act IV, although line 1 contains a slight variation.*

IV.ii.40

IV.ii.50

IV.vii.83

MONARCH SESTINA

Project Monarch was a mind-control operation which was “recruiting” multigenerational incest abused children with Multiple-Personality Disorder for its genetic mind-control studies.

[....]

Now all of my brain was functioning through a wide variety of memory compartments, also known as multiple personalities, with no part of me left “free” of abuse. Now it was as though I had “no place to run,” not even in my brain. This drove me out of my mind which is exactly what my abusers [Senator Robert Byrd and President Gerald Ford] needed for total control.

—Cathy O’Brien, *Trance Formation of America*

An exoskeleton fixed and displayed in glass by hand
Splayed and fastened in a frame a split-wide tangerine
The air about the artwork beating with my piecemeal mind
Though I remain spread-eagle—the only pose one has in hell—
Each one of us arranged from translucent to deep blue crisis
And tagged with names to which only onlookers may give voice

One can’t just pluck the politics out of my voice
Like leaves out of the pool—cupping your hands
To stifle giggles pray or vomit in—in anodyne chlorine crises
Thrive—at the sink the examiner quarters tangerines
And it matters not what washes off the knife since he’ll
Return it to one of the sterile slits that fleck my mind

Pending toxicology the examiner will likely change my mind
Once found to lack for evidence the mind will find its voice
What I know to be ME transferred to my abdominal shell
Then he’ll replace my face then suture the Y with rough hands
Flitting in the bush—O see how the Metanoias’ tangerine
Lights the yard—how the garden’s Amnesias mature into crisis

Same as the way at this age my friends take on the look of “crisis
Actors” who all false-flag surprise and question the state of my mind
When I call out the names of their dead lookalikes amid the tangerine
Light through the Reagan leaves spilt on our bed as vines and voices
Of Cheneys dredge the room to prick and constrict my hands
Leaving me not so much as an allegory to wipe up with—is it hell

Even if the neuroses disguise it—and why the hell
Not serve one’s country entire in times of perpetual crisis
A half-baked Omelas with hard-ons in place of mops and hands
Hands hands—but if the examiner hears the muffled mind
Calling from the sewn-shut gut—if the collector hears voices
Or sees a tiny fog on the display’s glass—my wings blood

Orange at night—they might then listen through the tangerine
VanderJagt howling from the garden to learn of a version of hell
Whose improbable convolutions are boiled out of the voice
To leave only this truth—a butterfly for each national crisis
Was led into my mouth and sealed therein until—they would remind—
Until it starved to death—till I craved guilt and thus was fed by hand

From hell I watch my earthbound ghost recycle every worn-out crisis—
Ghost which also quarters the tangerine of the clairvoyant’s mind
My voice which from his mouth pleads payment from my body’s hands

ARCTIC LATITUDES

A weed-wacked lawn sprinkled with barbeque, baseball, and swimming pool,
a pond so deep my hair trailed down into water as cold as the Neva.

I saw what that river could see –

Lenin, arm raised, palm turned up:

“Despair is typical of those incapable of struggle.”

My baleen lips had no bite. Better an albatross navigating over the sea,
half my brain shut down. I didn't know

the Arctic latitudes trifled with light. Vladimir veiled in iridescence,
pink line across the horizon.

Hohenzollern. Hesse. Hemophilia.

When the mystic pulled the ruble from the Tsarevich's ear, did Alexandra
understand the root meaning of amaze
is to confuse?

Not everyone wanted to dance with the Ballets Russes.

Anna Pavlova, wearing ice skates, spun like a water spout.

Extending her arms, she slowed her twirl,
and she could see the red sleighs,
their metal blades carving ice.

Molotov. Moscow. Malaysia Airline.

Bodies covered in cellophane, lying on their sides, legs bent and pulled-up waist high,

like the way I sleep every night. Now, the depth of water in which I swim,

floating on my back, chin up so the water covers my ears.

Arms stretched out. Eyes closed

to that wild watermelon sun.

JACALYN SHELLEY

SUBURBIUM DEI

1.

Three wives, three children—
the four chambers

of a leaking heart.

Sixty years
squinting

in the same light.

Parting clouds,
rain steaming on the sidewalk.

Walking now,

the windows
which I pass

reflect

both sides
of the street.

2.

Magnolia blossoms

shaved from stems.
A breeze flattens them

beneath the wheels
of homebound cars.

3.

The summer lawns,
unruly as morning hair,
which the lawlessness
of evening
combs into sleep.

4.

At night, the moon's metronome—
a startled compressor
marking time,
ticking off the moments
by which to dream.

5.

And a shovel
crucified between two nails.

A mop grieving
in the corner

Even the mower
has secrets—
this garaged pieta.

FOR THE BEETLE ON MY WATER GLASS

It was dark when I swallowed you.
You felt large as a church to me,
with your steel spire legs, eyes full
of stained glass.

Your steeped wings beat
bellsongs inside my throat.
In truth, you were so small. My tongue
too big to be your pew.

I named you Jonah.
The way you struggled
against my body, a prayer
in unfolded carapace.

I retched, and you slipped free.
Reborn on damp wings, aching and blue.

KNIGHTS INN MOTEL

The first time I watched the little glass bulb
fill with milk
I am 20, being clawed at

by a floral comforter in the Knights Inn Motel.
A man sits puffing on the twin mattress with pearls
for eyes. The box TV lies awake

with static, afterthoughts to the raging
smoke and my naked body.
The bulb is passed; a ritual of

communion wine and methamphetamine or:
the blood and the body.
My hands, now earthquakes, cradle the glass

while the rocks spark and I inhale fire
or glass or pain or—
roaches crawl on the walls

of my face leaving red tracks in
the soft whites of my eyes.
The dull yellow of the lamps screaming

light is my entire world.
I crawl into the warm ribs of the man beside me and
we lie in silence, in static, in buzzing—

Now, he is dead or asleep;
and I slink to my shoes that I lace like rabbits
ears, the way I have since I was a child.

I silence the lamp, his face
still as I soften the blow
of the door with my fingers.

UNDER THE EAVES

you should know by now that I experience my skin
as tiny pinpricks emitting soft refracted light

rendering a desirable
world

what I say has a lie in it
still speaking, I've returned from the meadow
from the pillowed queen anne's
lace, yarrow, lupine by the roadside draining oils
upward into a pierced blue
and it's not that you flash through me
but between any two objects
is a vibrating that determines an impulse
the pulse of the exchange—

here, have a piece of glowing candy
take it as a truce

DEAD FLAGS

After Ivan Grubanov, "United Dead Nations," Venice Biennale, 2015

I

Sprawled together on the floor,
disfigured like bodies deflated,

the flags' individual colors
hemorrhaged into one necrotic maroon—

dried blood or smears of collective memory.

White gallery walls leave no room for
blame or official narrative of how

my old country was sucked into a distant star,
swallowed after a brief fiery splash,

leaving behind a disk of dust & debris,
people drifting through day & space.

Dead flags litter the ground
& I circle the scene.

How far do you trust your memory
& how far your leaders?

II

I'm watching a film at a café:
ten minutes of water rippling across
the screen, edgeless & unrelenting.

The director says memory is an old photograph
& the camera will not zoom in close

or as close as you would like,
without losing focus & faces,

everything pixelated, broken into
water & conflicting cubes—

I find blame in the cubes
& the horizon pulls away.

III

My father & I see a faded Yugoslav
flag flickering against an absolute blue,

hanging off the side of a building
in Old Belgrade, as if forgotten there
or about to jump to its death.

We raise our cameras, but the fabric
folds out of frame. We never see the star unwrinkled.

I ask him, *Was it better?*
He says they're demolishing the
old railway station by the Sava River.

My mother says it would have been
a perfect place to live—
if not for the people in it.

IV

I feel as foreign to my new country
as the yellow-blossomed forsythia,

its invasive Balkan bloom
ocher on a warm day,

or California's misunderstood eucalyptus,
which the nativists would decimate

though eucalyptus is neither caustic
nor corrosive, as commonly believed.

I think what they ought to say is,
“Our species arrived here first.”

V

A different me memorized flags as a child—
tiny finger on the atlas, arm of a compass,

scaling distance, Iran to Argentina,
blotches on a map—thinking to
prove a unity of all people.

I’ve since learned there is only the anomie.

VI

They redrew the maps again,
erased the country I was born in,
split my language like an atom,

leaving me this pile of consonants
posing as a name & what it is to stop
caring about a mispronounced name.

VII

They’re inventing new grammar—
a music incipient, prelude to nothing,
thin strings stripped of history or context.

Soon I’ll be mute in that tongue.

But when I sleep, the Dalmatian sky is
nested below me, the Adriatic faced above,
green water flooding my head,

words hit walls & bounce-slide,
a language tide pulls away.

THE CONSTRUCT OF ORDER

I pulled off the road when my cell phone rang.
Through the windshield, clothes dry on a line.
I close one eye then switch to the other
play with perspective, watch an entire house
disappear. The tiger carries with it
all the fights of its father all the brutal,
necessary killings. Old love wicks through
the cleaned, then cleaned again carpets. & now,
as spring struts around half naked I'm fatigued
by leaves that grow like speed freaks.
As soon as I hang up I'll phone Hospice,
use frequent flyer miles to get to Florida.
For now, the clothes flag in the wind.

CARL & ANITA

Light floats in the maples above the pool.
A pair of mallards we've named
Carl & Anita crash land in the shallow end.

They do us no harm.
We let them swim.

A book lies prone on the swing.
The potted petunias are watered,
a bee hums as it leaves each center.

We suppose a kind of blessing—

when the sun spills through the trees
& spotlights a small spider on the coping.

A mower in the distance hums its work song;
the smell of fresh grass cuts a potion.

This morning, before first light
an owl called from the distance

I went out by the pool, spooked a feral cat,
then sat in the dark to listen.

We've lived through the dying. &
there will be more. For now

Carl is happy
to follow Anita to the deep end
awninged by the trees.

They move easily
together—they are not going anywhere.

BLOOD PRESSURE

for Matthew

In the hospital you tell me
you don't want to feel.
You mean you don't want
to want to kill yourself.
I can't feel
the scars on my hands,
two pink delicate maps,
where I used to bite them.
I can't feel my tattoos.

I know how you find
these moments,
the chalky remains
in your throat
that slip past
our father
and your friends
as you graze curbs
on the edge
of the skate park,
trace stick figures
with the blood
from your knees.

Now, the TV washes
across your face—
a cluttered lake,
oil-trailed and blooming
with clumps of red plastic
and foam, I know
it's rushing up your nose.
The TV becomes your dreams.

THE TASTE OF BLOOD

Asphalt-warm between
your teeth, it drops like pennies
feeding a meter.

OXYCODONE

Mother of Pearl.

Porcelain rimmed
toilet seat
at the back of the 7-11.

Your spine dissolves
to Pixie Dust.

Your brain bursts
and shines
like yolk
swishing at the base.

You want to drink
from the bowl.

Your teeth
roll, jaw-
guttered marbles.

White
and thinness
of your skin.

The light
blue of your veins.

Florescent beams,
the chill
of piss-riddled tile.

Then
the layers break
to flakes.

BRITISH COLUMBIA PASTORAL

September: almost snow.
White sheets across
the sky, the fields. How strange

the frost, feral over desert
hills. Sage brush
caught in the cattle's

teeth. The river cuts
a swath where I am
trying to tell you about grass

that presses up through
the ground without urging.
About merciless suns

taking our eyes. You shield
your mouth as I speak.
The wars I won't admit

like dying daisies, their corpses
linting the grass. In summer,
we swam in the Thompson

River. In feral heat. Baptized
new again. The kites
of our bodies cutting

a swath through green
water. But as water rises
in spring, it will take you

with it. With thawed glaciers
& snow. With bones
we can't make smaller

once grown. Dead trees
claw at rocks on the river-
bottom, swollen belly

of a child rising up
like a balloon
in the April sun.

GHOST WALK AFTER THE RESURRECTION

I hear the clatter of hands inside
my chest & breathe silver
air like tacks, as I pry open
barn doors. I want to climb

attic stairs & jump
from the loft. To fall,
knowing it means nothing
to be splayed & broken

as weeds, as yellow buttercups
beneath the sun's
heat. How the yard comes
back regardless of a long

winter, blades that gut
the soil. Chickens sing
from a coop, surrounded
by wire. Jostling each other

like refugees on a train
platform, the morning
I left Ukraine. I collect
threads & collars. Missing

buttons. Remnants of a man,
gone. Into the woods, I walk. Petals
of light falling through pines'
fingers. Falling on stone.

DUCK AND COVER

While, three halls away, parents tend
to their souls on bruising pews,
in St. Luke's dark Fellowship Room

that reeks of candles, kid sweat, and spaghetti
socials, a black duck
taunts a polecat in striped overalls,

hot-foots a fat banker in spats,
then does his Daffy dance—leaping
like a quark, spinning, hand-springing,

blasting his machine-gun quack
until a scowling bear *ker-WHACKS*
his yellow beak right off his face!

Laughter's five cherries line up—
Prrringgg!—releasing from the depths
of my small body, outsized whoops,

hollers, and yaks. Like a mob racing
to see a spaceship land, all my strength
sprints to my diaphragm.

My limbs go loose, body sliding down
my plastic chair as my shrieks assault
the air, and the dam in my lower half gives

way. There's sin in this, but pleasure too,
mixed with hot humiliation
to feel my khakis darken in the flow.

Is this how God felt as the world surged
out of Him—a glad release easy
to scorn, so He made Himself Lord

of Thunder and the Howling Hurricane?
 "I'll smite the snot out of the first one
 who makes fun," I silently swear

as I climb back in my chair, and wait—
 already shivering—for bulbs to click on,
 and let there be light.

ETYMOLOGY

Scurvied and thin, the pilgrims slog ashore
at Plymouth, lugging brine-soaked English words.
Normans charge through England, loosing

clouds of Norse-accented French. Saxons
row and blow across the Channel in boats
loaded with cows and Nordic gutturals.

They're met by Celts—nude, painted blue—
hurling curses thick as spears, in a language full
of coughs. The Indo-Europeans drag

their lexicon across Eurasia, each new tongue
built, like Troy, on a forebear—back
and back to the first grunt learned and passed

along, the words forgotten but contained
in what remains as we contain ancestor-
mammals, the reptiles that hatched them,

and their parent-fish—back and back
to when the first braids of DNA began
their crawl toward the grand abstractions—

Truth, Justice, Courage, Love, Nobility—
that heaved us out of slime, then drove us
from the Garden with a thunder

we call God, His language reaching back
to when some Singularity commanded
the Great Nothing, "Let there be."

SLEEPWALK (THE SYMPTOMS)

*Which was more painful, to be a refugee
in someone else's country or a refugee
in your own?*

—Mahmoud Darwish

At night, you carry ladders
in your sleep. You wander

to and from the window, (I watch you),
dusk stitched to your step. The moon

rolls nickels through the sky as you climb,
ascending, descending

through the night. You open
up the window, starlight-tangled hair,

moonlight bleeding from pale ankles. You prop
your ladder against the wall, climb barefoot,

slip back through the skylight. I search
for something to learn from this, something to spend

myself on. Your lighthouse body
glows. The tide rolls

through your lips. Dawn music
fills your bedroom. You fall asleep

with the map in your hand.

ELEGY FOR SAFE KEEPING

Moonlight blues your silhouette,
a candle-flicker in the darkening hall,
as you pour yourself, turned

from me, into bed. The faucet leaks,
your eyes cast shadows on the wall
in the shapes of tree-branches, humming

power-lines, storms pressed to brick
and mortar. There are still silences
swallowing the distance

between us. Metaphors I can't create, doors
opening to nowhere. Whisperings behind
the walls. Listen: there are seventy-two ways

to say, *I'm leaving*,
without tripping the alarm.

A COSMOGRAPHY OF MELANCHOLY

The morning I spent on Mars
mainly I felt bored.
Which is to say Mars might as well be Hell.
Next to boredom, shame's
the feeling most akin to feeling
like a sweat-drenched hair shirt
previously owned by Satan.
With each new breath I took in the red ambiance,
my breathing apparatus
inspired me less than the ten-pound epaulets
any spaceman worth a damn can shoulder.
Earth looked like one of those trick paintings—
first a skull,
then a lady at her vanity,
then a skull again,
then a shaving mirror clouded with shower steam.
As a species we want *gravitas*, I thought,
and got more bored trying to remember
who invented prayer, which is to say
don't we all need some way to shut up
the troll within the troll within the troll?
Other than the Sea of Crises,
which anyway's a landmark on the Moon,
or the Plain of Judgment and the Vale of Mourning
and the Elm from which False Dreams Cling,
which anyway are sites to see in Hades,
about my sojourn in the brutish atmosphere of Mars
there's nothing more to say—
other than, Do you know the mosquito
eater doesn't eat mosquitoes?
It drinks from the Sea of Nectar—then, when it's all
grown up, has sex and dies. Bitterly, bitterly.

GUIDANCE

My father taught me words like
fuck
and *cocksucker*.

He was trying to prepare me
for the future.

THE PACKAGE

She is labeling every Last Time,
tucking each one away.
The doctor leaves the room for a

place where he can be of some use
and she wonders about her liver,
what it looks like spotted

or even unspotted—
she's never seen it before
and now it is killing her.

They know what to do with
the body, but what are the rituals
for a half-eaten jar of peaches

at the back of the fridge? The comb
with her hair still in it? The coat
hanging limp by the side door?

Three weeks ago she ordered
a new green blouse. It'd be at the
house by now.

How simple—to open a box,
know what's inside.

NATURAL HISTORY

When we smash a shiuli with the back of our heels, we
repossess the petals in entirety—the opening in the middle,

the stem as orange as the fruit, the mud-stain on the edges
of the petals. This is how we rid the flowers of their ghosts:

memorized rhyme-schemes, eight year old voices repeating
the same lines over and over again. These voices that can

only speak in accents of ascension, the radiance attributed
to grammar, the certainty in learning the difference between,

is, *are* and *am*, the uncertainty of remembrance. Spell a word
wrong, a thwack on your head. Replace *am* with *are*, kneel

in front of a class. Inside my sister's tongue, a flower is nothing
but a dialect of failure. In the myth that dies its own gossamer

death inside the illustrator's ink, a tomcat and a field-rat drag
together—in between themselves—a little girl's head with rosy

lips, chubby cheeks, dimple chin. In the myth that my sister
writes with a broken twig on the damp grounds, they are squeezing

this girl's head within the openings of a red hibiscus. It's monsoon:
the first drops of rains on sister's eyebrows. Yet, her chapped lips

are bleeding, as if it's the middle of winter. Her alphabets, floral
as the shape of our baby cousin's milk-vomit on the floor.

The petal-cracks unloosen the knowledge—the girl is no one to us,
but could have been. When we suck the nectar out of its crimson

petals, it is the honey of her blue eyes that we're swallowing. A
humming bird drags the end of her blonde curls with its beak,

and we find a village of dead caterpillars inside the crevices
of the calyx, their forms intact. The belly of a flower

is an amateur entomologist's notebook, an alleyway where
insects come to live their blotting paper demise, along with
goldilock girls. Anger is the manure on which my sister
is tracing the architecture of brown foxes, secret staircases,
the neighbor-woman who turns into a rojonigondha stalk
while breastfeeding. And, I, who cannot do much other
than watch, am trying to follow.

GIFT, NO RETURN

We once had no words for you.
When the first bow broke to palm
 begging for purpose as all good things

 do, it looked to sky to cloud to find
a language in and for the wood.
 And when you broke the same at dawn,

begging my body for purpose as all evil
 beings do, I slid to the hardwood floor
and carved your snake into the beam.

WHAT I CHOSE TO DISINHERIT

Let me begin & say I believe in ghosts
as much as the next silo.

A man picking at blue stickers
I've placed on every limb

I'm bound to sell. My body a yard sale,
a man who asks the last time

this rifle had been cleaned, oiled, fired.
Propped against a shoulder

so the boy felt the kick of taking
the onlooker's life. A wife

fingering the garden gnome. Trophy
buck a man wanted desperately

to nail inside my chest. Let me start
over & admit what makes

this body lighter is not the radio silence
driving out to the woods,

a man showing me *here, this*
is how you gather your bones,

but a limp neck. My open jaw streaked
with blood. When what

came apart in dusk-light as wings
is too hot to bury in my mouth.

When I admit I have been told
never to frame a window

out of anything that breathes
but I am learning.

ROLLING PIN NIGHT

Each daybreak, after quiet rolling,
someone hangs it up:
their sound hand
grasping the smooth black
floured with stars
and fitting the hole in one end
over the dedicated nail.

The dough of the moon
again must wait.

All day, the truth and rustle
of light.

THE ENGINE OF A LIE

I never saw the Ramones play live, but an acquaintance did—a furious thirty-minute set on the *Riverboat President*. Count to three and go. His story made me love them, convinced me I could be there, really there at that show with him and the punk crowd sailing up the Mississippi on an aging steamboat, the river's nutrients suffusing each longneck bottle of Dixie. So I've told people I was there. But what I'm actually telling them is how deeply I feel his story of the concert I never saw. And it seems today like I was there because, in fact, he took me just the same. The engine of any lie is always one life is never enough. It's brilliant we fancy ourselves differently than we are. The pair of eyes with the scotoma alone knows the pattern of its lightening. Or how the loss of a first love leaves us unrecoverable to ourselves. The docent told us all the hands of memorialized Lincoln were leftover molds the sculptor already had on hand. That story's origin has yet to be tracked down, though I passed it on to my wife as true the next day. Another theory is the artist has Lincoln signing the letter A with his right hand and the letter L with his left. Believe the hands. They are not inclined to lie. They figure that the time to squeeze the sachet's bitterness into the tea is the moment of its rising. They listen to the string to know this. And another truth in the passing, for every bar of soap, our skin is a diet. When the cancer had him, my brother's friend, music jumping through his head, the one, two, three, go madness was complete. His wife, watching the blue story unfold, not quite seeing for herself the eye's lightening, can at least tell people she too has died, and doubtless, we will believe her.

TOGETHER TWENTY YEARS, WE ORDER DECONSTRUCTED CHOCOLATE CAKE

Does that mean, you wonder, a scrambled egg, mounds of cocoa and sugar,
dusting of flour?

This is the chef's counter: heat beats onto your forehead, and mine.

The back of the stranger next to me, and my back. My arm, your arm.

We've talked about the way the cats fight,
the kitchen cabinets, my brother's improv class,
how best to soothe
a child learning to multiply.

Behind the counter, one in a damp blue bandana
ties an overhand knot in a scallion, tosses it onto the grill.
One in red suspenders, one with a chef's knife
tattooed along his scarred forearm. One broad column
calls it all out—a morel, a mid-rare, two mediums. Skillet,
strength, air like a broth. Tower of clean white plates.

Suddenly you get what you want in meetings. Suddenly
people are calling me a poet.

While you're in the restroom, our server—feline,
silver-studded—lifts your napkin from the bar stool
folds it in quarters, lays it on the counter.

(Earlier she faded in to ask what we'd like
just as, discussing a friend's divorce, you said *a hundred orgasms*.)

When do we know oxygen and carbon and chlorine are dessert?

Before driving home, a walk in the cool, the streetlights here green globes.

We laugh at the houses—three dormers, twelve windows,
dog the size of a pony trotting the length of a living room lit by its own moon.

The cake arrived with a dried slice of blood orange, stained glass ready to dissolve.

Here, clear cubes like ice, bright spheres inside.

Here the familiar—cones of yellowed white weighing down curved stems.

When we're almost asleep, I say,
*I don't know where all that food was coming from—
it was like they were inventing it into their own hands.*

BLOSSOM

Either grief has no shape,
sneaks through the cracks

like a poisonous gas
or I was born

forgotten. Nurses fed me milk, scotch-
taped a ribbon to my head.

It probably wasn't so bad.
Just a little bit

arbitrary. As arbitrary as this
February morning when,

driving home and not wanting
to get there, I passed a Magnolia exploding

so pink, I was brought to my knees
in unrehearsed worship. God,

how it hurt—seeing it; how close
that was to being seen.

FROM THE GORE OF THE FOREST (PART 2)

10.

For the boys who remember two or three hundred sea shanties
& know the words by heart & can't conceive
of a mark that corresponds

to their own initial, even given a tutor & a chisel & a week's reprieve,
for the hunters who coax
mergansers from their thatch bunkers at the edges of glacial ponds

& fill them with buckshot to share with folks
back home, & for union-men singing bawdy verses instead of going to mass,
with rhymes that never repeat, pinning their panties

to a latticework of barbed wire,
& for our friends with biblical names whose broke-ass
faith only works around a campfire:

One: What have you seen? Two: Where have you been? Three:
Do you think, weirdoes, cavalry, there's hope for me?

FROM THE GORE OF THE FOREST (PART 2)

13.

In honor of the death of the world's oldest tree
the park officials erect a sign:
Here's where Methuselah used to be,

in real life. In life, her true location had to remain
undisclosed, because our human air is hostile,
our oxygen & pH, our detergents.

Here's a fact so obvious its emergence
struck me dumb: the day this sapling broke the soil,
an entirely different set of trees was on the planet.

Likewise for the planet's oldest human, a turnover rate
of a hundred percent: everyone alive on your birthday is dead
now, how about a pat on the scarred

bark of the back: no victory ever seemed more pyrrhic:
The queen is dead, long live the queen, goes the idiotic lyric.

THE ONLY THING LEFT TO DO

It takes courage to live
A quiet life—soaking
Almonds over night,
Watering the orchids
Every two weeks, keeping
The silverware well
Ordered, the knives all
Sharp. But creepy patterns
Always seem to emerge:
Rain slipping down the glass,
The same car passing out
Front all day, a tiredness
That never leaves. It is
Funny how people say
That everything would
Be fine if only they knew
The future, when deep
Inside, each of us does.
But comfort still comes:
The perfect hunch of fog
That vanishes downtown
Completely. The road is
Freshly paved but the side
Walk always ends in the
Same place—right here
Where you are a someday
Vessel of worms, a bowl
Of just popped popcorn
Almost slow burning
Your lap.

STRANGER DANGER

for William Heywood Henderson

I have to cower beneath
The fig tree until the earth
Reels down the clouds
To be sure of what I am—
I carved my initials in one
So as not to forget which
Cage I must return to
When morning comes.
The sky is gorgeous,
Glitter-pinned tangerine.
Every swoop of wind
Quartz-fresh & on fire.
If you happen to become
A ghost before I do, please
Haunt my nights. Playing
Ringolevio with a heart
Will get you nothing but
Parrot fever. Let us live
Until the day technology
Has advanced enough
To pack our guts
With egg rolls that taste
Like Happy Birthday,
Far beyond the year
Of the self-parking hatch-
Back to the unveiling
Of the contact lens that
Allows you to billow
The heart of anyone
You look at—overcome
Them with a sudden
Sense that they are deeply
Loved. The truth is
Beautiful, but always
It is shellacked with
Sadness. The slow dread

Of the start of life
Almost had me put in
A transfer to the end
Of the road. But some-
How the body learns
The comfort of the cage.
Now, I know what I
See—all the sad faces
Staring at me—but I am
Not sure about what
Anything *is*. The fruit
Sloughing from the peach
Tree is worm-bored, gives
Me turpentine & lipstick
Breath. A sparking swath
Of flickers always follows
Me, arrowheaded swoops
Whose eyes, each day,
Get sharper, more white-
Hot, ready for the just right
Time to buzzsaw on down.

PANEL VAN

You know the one about the white panel van,
the one about the dark sedan, the one I told
my daughter this morning,

the one about the man who's lost and needs
directions, the one about the man who lost
his puppy, the one that goes come here,

I'll show you a picture of my puppy,
the one that goes he's so cute, isn't he,
such a cute little lost puppy.

I told my daughter the one about the not-lost
not-puppy. I redacted the part about what's lost
being something in the man, something

he thinks a child can help him find, or maybe
he thinks she has it. She doesn't have it.
I didn't tell my daughter

the man was once a child. He had a mother
who zipped his tricky winter coat, tamed
his cowlick with her spit-wet thumb,

and how could she have known her son
would search the web for *cute puppy*
pictures, then roll past a park. This morning

I told my daughter the one about still loving
the world we live in, the world the man
lives in, lost. Yes, the same world.

NEGOTIATIONS

Each word opening like
an old style map we drag out
of the glove box in the dark,
how will we speak to each other

of our simplest hopes, or of those
who bore us—not whole, not
from their foreheads? Years ago,
we tore off a roof as a storm blew up.

We cussed and spread our tarps.
When it cleared, our pounding resumed
its relentless, desperate prosody.

We sang hoarse motown, balanced
plywood, shingles, and car notes
to stay ahead of the rain.

We've met the enemy and he looks
like we would if we'd first
been dipped in gold, though
he might be more than kin.

For not offering up my limbs
to the lush Vietnam forest,
I've been pardoned. I never saw
how quickly a life ebbs

when a leg is blown off.
I know how it ebbs here
where many limp on, "bootless,

blood-shod" or struggle to recall
a bright word for the last bored
few who'll still listen.

MARLINS

I want to go out like the Florida marlins, I said.

In six games? he asked.

No, I said.

With Mike Lowell swinging? he asked.

No, I said.

Running low on funds and selling all your best? he asked.

No, I said.

He wouldn't let me talk.

But I had just learned how the marlins go out,

a slow dissolve to the brain's blue glow,

the last thing to go.

SAINT BONNEVILLE OF THE UNHOLY FATHER

He threw the keys too high and far so I'd miss and he could call me a girl in front of my girl. "Maybe *she's* the *he* and *you're* the *she*?" He'd say this shit and never think of himself as a bastard, because as he always said, "Facts is facts." He pointed at us, "You're riding in *my* Bonneville, got it from Carson at work. If it's a clunker, he's fired." All my father's relationships were bound by thick ropes, sailor knotted into the bone, down to whatever makes you bleed. I picked up the keys and opened the door for Goldie. I called her that because of her hair and her heart, and my father never saw that car again. Somewhere—I could make up the name of the township we were ripping past but I want this to be factual—I heard a snap. The car felt it too, lunged hard. Its spirit broken free of its body. Goldie let loose a holler I bet smacked my father awake, made him curse the day. My laugh and her scream were our wedding vows, in the church we ditched by the side of the road. We walked ourselves down the black-tarred aisle.

SONNET WITH DEATH AND
RED CHECKERED TABLECLOTH

When I die, may you go to the dark place,
which is what we called that Italian joint
on El Camino, and may a waiter
handsome as the devil himself whip up
a carbonara from angelic eggs
and sea-salt-cured prosciutto made from pigs
nurtured on Parmigiano-Reggiano.
May you follow him down basil-scented
halls to a storeroom and lie on a bed
of coffee beans slick with dark roasted oils
and forget me. At least may your memory,
if God answers any prayers, be as faint
as an old man's memory of the perfume
his mother wore as she rocked him to sleep.

“DO YOU REGRET WHAT YOU’VE DONE?”

—*questionnaire*

if regret is mourning
if regret is the lie
we tell ourselves when sleep won't come
if regret takes blurry photographs
in black & white
posts them on Facebook
for many to ignore
if regret sings in the shower
a happy song to hide
the chiming undertones of operatic death
if it scrapes blood off highways &
erases the scar on my thumb
if it rolls the boulder up
if it laughs
at inappropriate moments
in the best of company
if someone says “*regret!*” &
means it without a definition
if a man dies clinging
to empty absent moments
from his youth
if regret is a pause upon waking
if regret is a pause before rest
if regret is life without mercy
spent daily wearing the lion's skin

SINCE SOME CROWS USED TO BE ANGELS,

we can learn a lot from the things they gather:
marbles and matchbooks

and silver dollars,
spoons left behind in our coffee cups,

whatever reminds them of halos,
whatever sparks.

Grenade pins waiting in arguments,
or the wires behind your heart switch—a crow

detaches from the shadows, grabs,
and steals away.

A woman standing at her mailbox, for instance . . .
not junk this time but an unexpected present.

A crow flies over, then circles back
to memorize her smile.

IT'S WHERE SHE LIVES

You climb the hills, the next and another
they close and open a notch a hollow
some weeds and gravel, a back way in—

inside her kitchen the light is dusted
with chaff from harvest
the window's open

the kettle on. She asks how are your sisters
doing although you have none, you say you do.
They're well, they're well—

this birth, that sadness. She places cups
upon the table their rims are circled with gold
worn thin. Her fingers arch her wrist is steady

she pours out tea. She has all the time
in the world: her palms are open
to say she does. The smell of diesel—
they're fixing the tractor—

the call of doves—the clang of wrenches
beside the shed. More tea? she asks,
and you remember the way hills wander.

She's gone, or are you.

It all repeats. Like bread that's kneaded, the hills
keep folding in on themselves. *You'll never find her*,
horizons murmur. You keep on climbing. You have to climb.

SPEEDING

The music in the car muted the rain
on the road save the wiper blades'

repetitive thuds. No headlights, no
taillights, no deer or traffic signals.

Alone, out here, is part of the landscape.
The wind buffets me across

the asphalt's long shine. The stereo
swears *the world is as soft as lace, but*

I don't love anyone. Outside, the world
the world is as soft as lace. The ghosts

of train tracks clack under my tires. The mile-
markers streak green skyward into night.

FORTUNE COOKIE

You pick up the cookie and crack
it open. You spread the paper with your fingers
and read—*Happiness begins*
when you face life with a wink and a smile.
You snort and throw it away. And you wish
that just once you'd get a shitty fortune.
You wish the cookie would say that your father
will spend the next ten months in the hospital
with a plastic shunt sticking out of his skull
to drain fluid from his swollen brain
until he finally dies—you wish it'd say
that by the end, your father won't even recognize
you, that he'll be rambling about chickens
and horses, believing that he's still in his ranch
in Mexico, that he'll say he likes the pozole
when he's eating a tuna sandwich you bought
for him in the cafeteria—you wish it'd say
that in his last moments of lucidity he will look
you straight in the eye, and he will tell you he's sorry
for having been such a horrible father,
that you'll answer that it's okay, that you forgive
him—you wish the cookie would say
that when your father finally dies, it'll hurt
more than anything has ever hurt
in your life, but that every year after his
death you'll buy one of those cloying tres leches
cakes that he loved so much, and as you eat
it next to his ashes you'll remember his calloused
hands cutting up the beef for the pozole
that he used to cook on Sundays after church,
and you'll smile.

SCRIPTORIUM
BY MELISSA RANGE
(Beacon Press, 2016)

REVIEWED BY PHILIP BELCHER

In a speech commemorating the hundredth anniversary of Gogol's death, Philip Rahv said that Vladimir Nabokov, as a Gogol critic, "suffer[ed] from something like a phobic fear of all interpretive techniques not strictly literary in reference—a fear driving him toward the extremely one-sided emphasis which takes the literary act to be a phenomenon solely 'of language and not of ideas.'" Because contemporary poets who yield to the pleasures and disciplines of various formal elements still appear on the current literary landscape infrequently enough to be considered exceptions to the norm of loose free verse, readers encountering them also are tempted, like Nabokov reading Gogol, to expend so much energy admiring these poets' facility with language that they devote inadequate attention both to considering the poems' ideas and to evaluating the effectiveness of the poets' formal skills in making those connections with readers that make poems memorable and worth the interpretive effort. So striking is Melissa Range's devotion to formal, particularly sonic, inventiveness that a reader encountering Range's poems for the first time might well be tempted to focus on the poet's language to the exclusion, or at least the diminution, of the ideas presented by the poems. That would be unfortunate.

Range made clear her intent to luxuriate in sound in her first volume of poems, 2010's *Horse and Rider*. For example, that volume's "The Warhorse" opens with a burst of alliteration:

*Oft has the warhorse, the wayworn widowmaker,
with wearied withers been dismissed
from battle, bereft of bit and bridle,
saddened and saddle-sore, to survive
his final charge, his last campaign—
the paddock, the pack, the stall.*

Range is no less committed to form and sound in her second volume, *Scriptorium*, but careful readers will notice an evolution. Although form and content are congruous in all of Range's work, that alignment is tighter in *Scriptorium* than in *Horse and Rider*. In *Scriptorium*, readers will notice in poems like "Ultramarine" how Range disciplines her use of alliteration, meter, and rhyme in service of the poems:

*Beyond the blue scum sea, miners assault
lazurite and pyrite, a blue-gold beam,
pry from limestone caverns the lapis seam
for the shade that painters' patrons so exalt
to hem the Virgin's mantle, foam the Vault
where she's fixed like a lodestar or a gem.*

Scriptorium, selected by Tracy K. Smith as a 2015 National Poetry Series winner, includes thirty-three poems and five pages of notes that help orient readers unfamiliar with the historical settings in which some of these poems are placed. One of the particular joys in reading *Scriptorium* is puzzling over the form and structure of the volume as a whole. Of the thirty-three poems, the titles of ten name pigments used in illuminating manuscripts. Each of these ten, spread more or less evenly throughout the book, is a sonnet—not the fourteen-line, half-rhymed semi-sonnet that one reads so often these days, but an end-rhymed, metrically consistent, honest-to-Goodness sonnet, many with a conspicuous volta in which the speaker turns to address God directly.

Range, a trained theologian, also draws on her East Tennessee origins as a source for *Scriptorium*. In poems like “Hit” and “To Swan,” the poet highlights the quirks of her native Appalachian, Southern dialect. Here, Range is her most playful. The opening lines from “Flat as a Flitter” will suffice to give a flavor of these poems:

*The way you can crush a bug
or stomp drained cans of Schlitz out on the porch,*

*the bread when it won't rise,
the cake when it falls after the oven-door slams—*

*the old people had their way
to describe such things. “But what's a flitter?”*

*I always asked my granny. And she could never say.
“It's just a flitter. Well, it might be a fritter.”*

*“Then why not say ‘fritter?’”
“Shit, Melissa. Because the old people said ‘flitter.’”*

Readers unaccustomed with the colloquialisms and patterns of speech in these poems will be seduced by their humor and intimacy. Readers from the South will be grateful for these poems' authenticity and their lack of the faux-

folksiness of writers ashamed or too proud of their own histories. These poems also recall ones by Rodney Jones and R.T. Smith in which those poets deal with their own Southern heritage and the evolution of language and place into something more homogenous than they remember. Range is no more regional (if that term is used in some limiting sense) than Jones and Smith; she, like they, uses her particular circumstance to address more universal themes. These poems address, too, the difficult break from the bonds of place and family toward promise and a fulfillment unavailable within the confines of the familiar. In “Crooked as a Dog’s Hind Leg,” the speaker asks how she might explain to her grandmother “that the creeks crisscrossing / our tumbledown ridges // are ropes trying to pull my heart straight / when it’s a crooked muscle, / its blood crashing in circles?”

Although two themes—language and the relationship between the speaker and God—underlie all of the poems in *Scriptorium* (Could there be a better metaphor for that thematic intersection?), two poems emphasizing aspects of those topics deserve particular mention. It was a particular delight to see in “Incarnational Theology” a thoughtful treatment of the German theologian Jürgen Moltmann. Although Range’s note on this poem is useful, it is not necessary for enjoyment of this fine villanelle. The poet combines her facility with received forms, her theological preoccupations, and her Appalachian vernacular to conceive a poem worth the price of the book. Few other contemporary poets are writing like this:

*God takes on flesh and thinks he’ll smother.
Reeling, obsessed, his heart a wilderness,
God’s a mess, suffering in me as I suffer*

*over a torn leaf, a tore-up man, the others
I’ve tried to love, shorn to the bone and luckless
as the Son. [. . .]*

If any single poem in *Scriptorium* incorporates all of Range’s concerns, “Ashburnham” does. The related note helpfully describes the 1731 Ashburnham House fire that damaged and destroyed many manuscripts in the Cotton Library. Among those damaged severely was the only extant copy of *Beowulf*. The eighteen unrhymed couplets describe the origin of the library when books discarded from scriptoria upon the dissolution of monasteries were saved and collected and then their destruction by the fire. This is not merely a description of literary and historical loss; the loss seems personal to the speaker and, by extension here, to the poet. But the damage did not begin with the fire. The originals were “[. . .] irretrievable / the instant the pen quenched // the harp: a smoldering / smothered, a ruin of the tongue.” Range reminds the reader

through the content and the form of her poems that language was spoken and heard before it was written. Her musings in these pages, the scriptorium in which she considers language, her history, and the role of the divine in both, deserve to be heard as well as read.

ORIGINAL FACE
BY JIM PETERSON
(Gunpowder Press, 2015)

REVIEW BY GARY DOP

Jim Peterson's latest collection, *Original Face*, weaves meditative inquiry with narrative mastery. These stories and reflections return, again and again, to Adam and Eve, to man and woman, and to the possibility that all of life's suffering, sensuality, and joy are part of a sweeping love story. This suggestion risks oversimplifying Peterson's book, which contains multitudes in each of its moments, including explorations of Goya's paintings, a maintenance engineer's love song, and people who live inside loose-fitting bags.

Original Face's distinction is its close focus on expansiveness and inclusivity. In "The Long Roads," a poem whose subject seems to be the loss of a child, Peterson expands the subject matter to the relationship or connection of all things: absence and presence, body and earth. The poem, as expected, presents the mother's loss, but her behavior—her calmness and acceptance—provides an unexpected response, which is built upon the presence of the lost child, active and involved in the scene, as though death has not ended life as much as it has changed it.

The poem's closing sentence follows a moment in which the mother considers a pickup passing by, a moment we perceive as normal until the child, who we know to be dead, is present. Unlike the reader, the mother finds the child's presence to be as normal as the pickup: "the presence she feels / dreaming in the leaves around her." Soon "her man" will be home:

*The night will crawl out
from the roots of great maples and oaks
through their windows and into their bed,
into the fallow and fertile fields,
down the long roads
that lead to all of their kind,
even that curious child
resting deep in the vine.*

Life continues in these "fertile fields," where the lost child, who is not a

passive presence, alive only in memory, but an active presence, is signified by that most alive adjective: “curious.” Here, “deep in the vine,” all things are one, all are normal.

Peterson supports this normalizing sensibility in the sounds of his poems. The music, which feels as easy and conversational as Whitman, has, like Whitman, a natural use of rhythm, consonance, and assonance, among other devices. In the previous example from “The Long Roads,” the closing three lines are strung together with the assonance of the hard I sound in the last word of each line, which complements the notion that all things—“kind,” “child,” and “vine”—are unified.

We see this unification again in “Planting Season,” a poem about the playful barroom connection of a woman and a man. This type of poem, the meeting of lovers, has been written since antiquity, but Peterson’s sincere, yet humorous version brings an earthy point of connection between the lovers. The poem’s narrated by the man—“She has black dirt on her face,”—but the action of the poem is the woman’s. She pursues. She establishes the game. She brings the black dirt, which is not only on her face, but also her feet, her hands, and in her mouth. For the man, the black dirt is not an object separate from the woman, something to be washed away, but it is a compelling part of her beauty. The poem ends, and the lovers are together, after the woman approaches the man, throws her dirty feet up on the table, and they speak to each other:

*“I hope you like
black dirt,” she says. I make a grin
with as much black dirt in it
as I can muster. “Oh yes,” I say.*

Perhaps it is the openness of his characters that makes his narratives, and the speaker in nearly all of these poems, dynamic. These people all seem to be taking in the world, “the light and the dark,” rejecting nothing; even in moments of suffering or difficulty, the characters do not walk away—they walk into and through their experiences.

They study each moment, as does the speaker in “Men and Women in Sacks,” who watches a woman remove her sack and swim in a river. When she steps out of the river, the speaker sees her: “her wet body glinting / like a sword.” He studies her, and when they’ve finally seen each other:

[...] together

*we step out of our sacks, open
our bodies to the light and the dark
and to each other, and together
we lie down in the river
of deep currents, the cold
pouring over us, together swim, free*

to find our own way home.

The speaker's freedom flows with the change that has arrived, a change born of the studied, open eye, receiving whatever comes. These characters, and the characters in many of Peterson's poems, model an openness that teaches the reader how to experience the book. No, it's more than that—*Original Face* wants to teach us how to live an open life, to help us crawl from our confining sacks. Peterson's poems all seem to say, of suffering, of joy, of dirt, of freedom, the same thing his readers will say of this expansive, moving collection: "Oh yes!"

LIFEDEATHETC / LIVDÖDETC

BY ANNA MARIS

(Red Moon Press, 2016)

REVIEW BY STINNE STORM

Red Moon Press' *lifedeathetc / livdödetc*, is the debut collection in the U.S. from Swedish poet Anna Maris. As its title implies, *lifedeathetc* holds to the natural cycles traditional to the haiku form, but Maris' work is not confined by these conventions. Without unfolding the centuries-long history of the haiku tradition, it can be noted that Maris's poems function within the well-known Japanese form that was initially composed of 17 syllables divided into three groups, respectively five, seven, and five syllables (more precisely, they are comprised of five, seven, and five morae, which determine syllabic stress or timing). Traditionally, haiku must include the natural world and should be in the present. The form originated in the 1600's and its conventions have undergone numerous changes, especially in the 20th century, as it spread to the Western world and became a common form in other languages.

Maris, a member of both the Swedish Haiku Society and Haiku Society of America, translates her own work into English, and the translations are exceptional. In some places, the diction in the original Swedish is more melodic than English, while in other places, her English vocabulary provides a wonderful openness to the haiku form. One example of such differences in English is "paper boat [...]," which in Swedish sails away with much more grace.

paper boat (singular)
another worry
sails away

pappersbåtar (plural)
så lätt flyter de bort
mina bekymmer

Whereas "long shadows" leaves one bird behind, graceful in its English alliteration.

long shadows
after the siege has lifted
a lone crane

*långa skyggor
efter att flocken lyft
en ensam trana*

Maris' poems excel in their depictions of nature. For this reader, well acquainted with the Swedish climate, her work invokes the Scandinavian seasons vividly. The text in "Part One (life)" oscillates from one changing season to the next, one elemental state to another: sea to fog, to mist, to rain, to rivers—and back to the sea. There is the wind in spring, deep harvests, crisp frosts, and winter stars. It is an intimate landscape, but not a tame one.

*moon river
thoughts wandering
out to sea*

mångata
tankarna vandrar
ut på havet*

**mån=moon /gata=street*

This cycle of haiku arranged around Nordic weather might well be a mediation for spaciousness, nature juxtaposed against domesticated spaces—bedroom walls and ceilings as canvases for projections of shadows and light, but with uncanny cracks in the harmonies and monotone beauty, the arrival of the unfamiliar on the scene.

*home town
in the familiar houses
strangers*

barbed wire another country

*hemstad
i de välbekantan husen
främlinger*

taggtråd ett annat land

This hometown of strangers and its "icy winds" hold traces of other continents—Africa appears via references to Zanzibar just after the above passage—but

when we meet the outside world it is through violence or alienation. The world, like the icy Nordic setting, is closing in, shrinking like “winter fishing,” like “the hole in the ice.”

In “Part Two (death),” nature might be the same, but the poems are not. A specific pain has arrived: “the same hole in our heart / white chrysanthemum.” This loss is ephemeral, the “thing with feathers” and the words that cannot be found in a suicide note. Here, the uncanny gives way to darkness, but still the beauty survives.

*insomnia
the cold on the other side
of the pillow*

*sömnlöshet
kylan på andra sidan
av kudden*

This is a good example of how the bilingual nature of the book opens up the poems in different ways. The original poem in Swedish has a distinct tempo created by the alliteration *s, k, s, k*, which is lovely to read and say aloud. Although it is not as melodic, the English version still preserves the stark simplicity of the metaphor. Here, in the heart of the collection, Maris is mourning the living, even as death becomes a physical weight.

*packing up to leave
everything we have
dead weight*

*i packningstagen
allting vi har
dödvikt*

Whereas the previous part began with a whisper, “Part Three (etc),” begins with “open sky” and a sea personified through its overt desire to take. There is a change in pace, as well as place. The urban is more present.

*high-speed train
along the railway line
wild apple trees*

*järnvägssår
snabbtåget passerer
vildäppelträden*

This is a nature enveloped by the city, a nature both globalized and unfamiliar.

*southern winds
foreign sea weed
covers the beach*

*sunnanvind
främmande sjögräs
täcker stranden*

Winter is never far away, but monsoons appear as well, as do a new-year's spider and wild boars in spring, and war. Again, the outside world is rife with troubles.

*war-epic
we pause for a firing squad
of micro-popcorn*

*krigsfilm
vi pauser för skottsalvan
av mikro-popcorn//*

This last section of the book feels at times disconnected, as if it is in search of something. Its title, "Etc.," implies a collection of things known, but unnamed. Perhaps for these reasons, it feels uneven. Or perhaps it is simply the stirring, for better or worse, that occurs when family enters the scene, the mirroring and defiance that their appearance brings. Here, we find a "mother's angry wrinkle / in my selfie," or, after the slow, rural rhythm of the life and death of the prior sections, the turbulence of a father's appearance in the final moments of the book:

*haiku
my father wonders
if that is all*

*haiku
min papa undrar
om det är allt*

As if the spaciousness of the first two sections is compromised by the onset of familial values, Maris invokes the natural world of the haiku. While much of the collection's imagery gives voice to a particularly Swedish tone and setting, it is here, through the mastering of a classic poetic form, that her work grasps something timeless. These last poems left this reader wondering, like the father, but for very different reasons, how could it not be all?

lifedeathetc. is a fine work of literature when it mediates the personal with the universal. When it positions itself in the contemporary, it is even better. There is currently a darkness in European societies, one which is difficult to write about and more difficult to live in. Within this space, Maris' literary generosity is a pleasure and a gift. There is similar darkness in all lives, but to escape it is not to conquer it. Haiku offer a way to navigate such troubles. Maris writes them with grace; we can read them with hope.

- Gary Beck, *Perceptions*, Winter Goose Publishing, 2016
- Justin Boening, *Not on the Last Day, But on the Very Last Day*, Milkweed Editions, 2016
- Rosa Alice Branco, *Cattle of the Lord*, Milkweed Editions, 2016
- Cassandra Cleghorn, *Four Weathercocks*, Marick Press, 2016
- Matthew Cooperman, *Spool*, Parlor Press, 2016
- Alexander Dang, *Are You Proud of Me?*, Where Are You Press, 2016
- Gerry Grubbs, *The Palace of Flowers*, Dos Madres Press, 2016
- R. Nemo Hill, *In No Man's Ear*, Dos Madres Press, 2016
- Janine Joseph, *Driving Without a License*, Alice James Books, 2016.
- Samantha King, *Born to Love, Cursed to Feel*, Andrews McMeel Publishing, 2016
- Lisa Lewis, *The Body Double*, Georgetown Review Press, 2016
- Emilie Lindeman, *mother-mailbox*, A Misty Publication, 2016
- Elizabeth A.I. Powell, *Willy Loman's Reckless Daughter or Living Truthfully Under Imaginary Circumstances*, Anhinga Press, 2016
- Nate Pritts, *posthuman*, A-Minor Press, 2016
- Natalie Safir, *Eyewitness*, Dos Madres Press, 2016
- Chris Santiago, *Tula*, Milkweed Editions, 2016
- Kevin Spenst, *Ignite*, Anvil Press, 2016
- Christine Stewart-Nunez, *untrussed*, University Press of New Mexico, 2016
- Kevin Spenst, *Ignite*, Anvil Press, 2016
- Susan Stewart, *Cinder*, Graywolf Press, 2016
- stinne storm, *mainland*, Toad Press, 2016
- Jeri Theriault, *Radost, my red*, Moon Pie Press, 2016
- John Tripoulas, *A Soul Inside Each Stone*, Dos Madres Press, 2016
- Panagiotis A. Tsonis, *An Autobiography*, Dos Madres Press, 2016
- Mai Der Vang, *Afterland*, Graywolf Press, 2016
- John Sibley Williams, *disinheritance*, Apprentice House Press, 2016

LINDSAY ADKINS' work has been published with *The 2River View*, *Muddy River Poetry Review*, *the Aureorean*, *Glass Mountain*, among others. She is also a poetry editor over at *Vine Leaves Literary Journal*. During the day, she works in NYC at Random House Publishing Group. At night, Lindsay spends most of her time battling her penchant for noodles, and losing.

PHILIP BELCHER is the vice president of programs for The Community Foundation of Western North Carolina in Asheville and the author of a chapbook, *The Flies and Their Lovely Names*, from Stepping Stones Press. A graduate of Furman University, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, and the Duke University School of Law, he also has an MFA in Poetry from Converse College and is the recipient of the Porter Fleming Prize in Poetry. Philip's poems and prose have appeared in numerous journals, including *The Southeast Review*, *Shenandoah*, *Southern Humanities Review*, *Passages North*, *Fugue*, *The Southern Quarterly*, and *Asheville Poetry Review*. He is an advisory and contributing editor for *Shenandoah*.

ACE BOGGESE is the author of two books of poetry: *The Prisoners* (Brick Road Poetry Press, 2014) and *The Beautiful Girl Whose Wish Was Not Fulfilled* (Highwire Press, 2003). His novel, *A Song Without a Melody*, is forthcoming from Hyperborea Publishing. His writing has appeared in *Harvard Review*, *Mid-American Review*, *Rattle*, *River Styx*, *North Dakota Quarterly*, and many other journals. He lives in Charleston, WV.

ROB CARNEY is the author of four books of poems, most recently *88 Maps* (Lost Horse Press 2015; see the review at bit.ly/88maps). He writes a regular feature called "Old Roads, New Stories" for *Terrain: A Journal of the Built + Natural Environments* (Terrain.org).

CAROLINE CHAVATEL is a Baltimore native and received her BA from Salisbury University in creative writing. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in *So to Speak*, *Slipstream*, *Potomac Review*, *Crab Creek Review*, among others. Her poem, "The Given, These Bodies," won *The Cossack Review's* first annual October Prize for Poetry. She is currently an MFA candidate at New Mexico State University.

CHAD M. CHRISTENSEN is the managing editor of the WSC Press and the co-director of the Plains Writers Series. He teaches writing and publishing at Wayne State College and earned his MFA from the University of Nebraska. He is also the co-founder of Pseudo Poseur Productions, which is a co-op for writers, musicians, and artists in northeast Nebraska. His books of poetry are *Ground Bound: a novel in verse* and *Shoot From the Hip*. He also writes a column

for the *Wayne Stater* called “High on the Plains.” He is currently working on his next book of poetry titled *No More Passing Notes In Death Class*. Find him on FB: Facebook.com/ChadWYKerrr

BRENDAN COONEY’S work has appeared in *Prairie Schooner*, *Guernica*, *Canary*, *Isthmus*, *Salon*, and other magazines. At the University of Alabama’s MFA program, he was an editor of *Black Warrior Review*.

STEVEN CRAMER is the author of five poetry collections, most recently *Clangings* (Sarabande, 2012). He teaches at Lesley University.

FRED DALE is a senior instructor in the department of English at the University of North Florida. His work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Dunes Review*, *Chiron Review*, *Crack the Spine*, *Raleigh Review*, *Stirring*, and others. When Fred’s not grading papers, he spends time with his wife and dog.

NANDINI DHAR is the author of the chapbook *Lullabies Are Barbed Wire Nations* (Two of Cups Press, 2014). Her poems have recently appeared or are forthcoming in *Potomac Review*, *PANK*, *Los Angeles Review*, *Whiskey Island*, *Bitter Oleander*, *Tusculum Review*, and elsewhere. She is the co-editor of the journal *Elsewhere*. Nandini hails from Kolkata, India, and divides her time between her hometown and Miami, FL, where she works as an assistant professor of English at Florida International University.

FAY DILLOF has had poems selected for publication in *Field*, *New Ohio Review*, *Bellevue Literary Review*, and *Shadowgraph*.

CHELSEA DINGMAN is a Canadian citizen who studies poetry and teaches at the University of South Florida in the graduate program. She has poems recently published or forthcoming in *Harpur Palate*, *The Adroit Journal*, *So to Speak*, *Quiddity*, *Grist: The Journal for Writers*, *The MacGuffin*, *Raleigh Review*, *The Fourth River*, *Bellingham Review*, *Sou’wester*, among others.

CASSIE DONISH’S work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Colorado Review*; *Best New Poets 2015*; *the Gettysburg Review*; *Sixth Finch*; *Quarterly West*; *Forklift, Ohio*; and elsewhere. A managing and poetry editor for *The Spectacle*, she’s currently an Olin Fellow and MFA candidate at Washington University in St. Louis. Cassie co-edited *February*, an anthology.

GARY DOP teaches writing at Randolph College on the edge of the Blue Ridge Mountains. His essays have aired on *All Things Considered*, and his poems have appeared recently in *Prairie Schooner*, *Agni*, *Rattle*, *New Letters*, among others. His first collection of poems, *Father, Child, Water*, was published by Red Hen Press in 2015.

ALICE O. DUGGAN loves to grow flowers at home and at her local public library. She loves to read biographies, history, humor, novels and poems, and play with her granddaughter. She is currently writing a collection of poems with nonfiction inclusions, about a dairy farm in the golden age of agriculture.

HANNAH EDWARDS, in her spare time, is a teaching assistant at a local children's theatre where she demonstrates talents such as standing on "just one finger" or "breathing under water." Recently, she and her girlfriend used 3D scanning and modeling to construct authentic Greek drama masks for productions of *Oedipus* and *Seven Against Thebes*.

JOHN FINDURA holds an MFA from The New School as well as a degree in psychotherapy. His poetry and criticism appear in numerous journals including *Verse*; *Fourteen Hills*; *Copper Nickel*; *Pleiades*; *Forklift*, *Ohio*; *H_NGM_N*; *Jacket*; and *Rain Taxi*. A guest blogger for *The Best American Poetry*, he has won and been a finalist for various awards. He lives in Northern New Jersey with his wife and daughters.

MAG GABBERT is currently a PhD student in creative writing at Texas Tech University, and previously received an MFA from The University of California at Riverside. Her essays and poems have been published or are forthcoming in journals including *32 Poems*, *The Rattling Wall*, *The Rumpus*, *The Nervous Breakdown*, *LIT Magazine*, *Sonora Review*, *The Doctor T. J. Eckleburg Review*, among other venues. Mag is also an associate editor for *Iron Horse Literary Review*.

JOY GAINES-FRIEDLER teaches poetry & memoir for non-profits, including workshops through PCAP (Prison Creative Arts Project). Her poetry has received wide recognition including a Pushcart Prize nomination and can be found in over 50 literary journals and anthologies, including *The New York Quarterly*, *The Paterson Review*, *Poetry East*, and others. Joy is the author of two full-length poetry books, and holds an MFA from Ashland University.

D.G. GEIS lives in Houston, TX. He has an undergraduate degree in English Literature from the University of Houston and a graduate degree in philosophy from California State University. Among other things he has taught Hellenistic philosophy and is a former Anglican priest. His poetry has appeared in *491 Magazine*, *Lost Coast Review*, *Blue Bonnet Review*, *The Broadkill Review*, *A Quiet Courage*, *SOFTBLOW*, *Blinders Journal*, *Burningword Literary Journal*, and *Crosswinds*. He will be featured in a forthcoming Tupelo Press chapbook anthologizing *9 New Poets* and is winner of *Blue Bonnet Review's* Fall 2015 poetry contest. He is editor-at-large of *Tamsen*.

DANIEL E. ARIAS-GOMEZ was born and raised in Guadalajara. He is currently a poetry student in the MFA program at CSU Fresno.

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BRIAN LAIDLAW is a poet-troubadour from Northern California. He has released the poetry collections *Amoratorium* (Paper Darts Press) and *The Stuntman* (Milkweed Editions), each of which includes a companion album of original music; another full-length poetry collection called *The Mirrmaker* is also forthcoming from Milkweed. Brian continues to tour nationally and internationally as a folksinger, and recently joined the creative writing PhD program at the University of Denver.

MICHAEL LAUCLAN'S poems have landed in many publications including *New England Review*, *Virginia Quarterly Review*, *The North American Review*, *Harpur Palate*, and *Poetry Ireland*. He has been included in anthologies from Wayne State University Press and Oxford University Press. His most recent collection is *Trumbull Ave.*, from WSU Press.

ALEX LEMON'S most recent book is *The Wish Book*. He is the author of *Happy: A Memoir* (Scribner) and three other poetry collections: *Mosquito*, *Hallelujah Blackout*, and *Fancy Beasts*. An essay collection and a fifth poetry book are forthcoming from Milkweed Editions. His writing has appeared in *Esquire*, *American Poetry Review*, *The Huffington Post*, *Ploughshares*, *Best American Poetry*, *Tin House*, *Kenyon Review*, *AGNI*, *New England Review*, *The Southern Review*, *jubilat*, and others. Among his awards are a 2005 Fellowship in Poetry from the NEA and a 2006 Minnesota Arts Board Grant. He is an editor-at-large for Saturnalia Books and the poetry editor of *descant*. He lives in Ft. Worth, TX, writes book reviews for the *Dallas Morning News*, and teaches at TCU and the low-residency MFA program at Ashland University.

SANDY LONGHORN has been known to obsess over the Chicago Cubs, her LAMY fountain pen, weather patterns in the Mid-South, the original *Law & Order* series, and how to make the best popcorn. She writes poetry and creates collages in Little Rock, where she might also obsess over her husband and their cats when she has the time.

MAJA LUKIC'S work has been published or is forthcoming in *Vinyl*, *Prelude*, *Salamander*, *The South Carolina Review*, *Posit*, *Canary*, and other journals.

Links to pieces published online are available at MajaLukic.com, and she can be found on Twitter: @majalukic113. Maja lives in New York City.

LAUREN MALLET was born in Lancaster, PA. Her poems appear or are forthcoming in *Tupelo Quarterly* and *Smartish Pace*. She is an MFA student and the assistant director of creative writing at Purdue University.

MICHAEL MARK is a hospice volunteer and long distance walker. His poetry has appeared or is forthcoming in *Cimarron Review*, *Gargoyle Magazine*, *Paterson Literary Review*, *Prelude Magazine*, *Poet Lore*, *Spillway*, *Rattle*, *The Sow's Ear Poetry Review*, *Sugar House Review*, *Tar River Poetry*, and other nice places. His poetry has been nominated for three Pushcart Prizes and the 2015 Best of the Net. MichaelJMark.com

EDWARD MAYES' poems have appeared or are forthcoming in many journals and magazines, including *The Southern Review*, *The New Yorker*, *APR*, *Kenyon Review*, *Best American Poetry*, *Agni*, *Harvard Review*, and others. His books of poetry include *First Language*, Juniper Prize (University of Massachusetts Press) and *Works and Days*, AWP Prize in Poetry (University of Pittsburgh Press). Edward lives in Hillsborough, NC and Cortona, Italy with his wife, the writer Frances Mayes. Their latest collaboration is *The Tuscan Sun Cookbook* (Clarkson Potter).

KATHRYN MERWIN is a native of Washington, DC. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in the *Minnesota Review*, *Permafrost Magazine*, *Folio*, *apt*, *Notre Dame Review*, *Jabberwock Review*, among others. In 2015, she was awarded the Nancy D. Hargrove Editors' Prize for Poetry and nominated for a Pushcart Prize. She currently serves as co-editor-in-chief of *Milk Journal* and managing editor of *The Scarab*.

CHRISTOPHER MUNDE'S poetry has appeared or is forthcoming in *Beloit Poetry Journal*, *Blackbird*, *Massachusetts Review*, *Third Coast*, *West Branch Wired*, and elsewhere. He completed his MFA at the University of Houston in 2008, and received an Academy of American Poets Prize the same year. Presently, he teaches at Jamestown Community College in western NY.

JOHN A. NIEVES has poems forthcoming or recently published in journals such as, *Cincinnati Review*, *Pleiades*, *Crazyhorse*, *The Literary Review*, *Verse Daily*, and *Passages North*. His first book, *Curio*, won the Elixir Press Annual Poetry Award Judge's Prize and came out in early 2014. He's an assistant professor of English at Salisbury University. John received his MA from USF and his PhD from the University of Missouri.

JENNIFER PRUIETT-SELBY, winner of *Smartish Pace's* 2015 Beullah Rose Poetry Prize, lives in rural Iowa with her husband, poet Jason Selby, and five children. Her work has found homes with *Prairie Schooner*, *Hobart*, *Calyx*, *Crab Creek Review*, *Lunch Ticket*, *Rust + Moth*, *Ember*, and *Red River Review*. Her column, "Awkward in the Midwest," appears monthly with *Easy Street Magazine*.

RICHARD ROBBIN'S work has appeared recently in *Cincinnati Review*, *Hubbub*, and *Indiana Review*. His fourth and fifth poetry books, *Radioactive City* and *Other Americas*, were published recently. He was also recently a fellow at the Hawthornden Castle International Retreat for Writers in Scotland.

LISA ROULLARD does not excel at bio writing. As often as possible she walks in the rain.

EVAN SCARBOROUGH is a young poet who consistently earns B-'s on his creative writing portfolios. One professor, Gary Dop, wrote about his poetry, "the work itself is good, but it was three days late, so I have to take off points." Evan hasn't been published, other than one time in kindergarten when he wrote a poem about a frog sitting on a log.

A member of the South Jersey Poets Collective, JACALYN SHELLEY teaches an extension literature class affiliated with The Richard Stockton University and hosts the Leap Street Poets workshop. She loves to play tennis with her husband and care for their teenage cockatoo—Boris Dimitry Yellnakoff.

MAGGIE SMITH is the author of *Weep Up* (Tupelo Press, forthcoming 2018); *The Well Speaks of Its Own Poison*; and *Lamp of the Body*. The recipient of fellowships from the NEA, the Ohio Arts Council, and the Sustainable Arts Foundation. Maggie is a freelance writer and editor, and a consulting editor to the *Kenyon Review*. MaggieSmithPoet.com

STINNE STORM is a danish poet and translator who holds three masters degrees—from the University of Utah, Gothenburg University, and the Royal Danish Academy. In 2012, she published her debut poetry collection, *mainland*. Later the same year, she published the collection *edens*. Her third book of poetry, *jämtska*, will be out December 2016. Among her translations are writings of Agnes Martin and letters of Edith Södergran (2017). For more information, visit: Stinne-Storm.com

ROBERT THOMAS' most recent book, *Bridge*, is a sequence of lyrical stories published by BOA Editions and received the 2015 PEN Center USA Literary Award for Fiction. His first book, *Door to Door*, was selected by Yusef Komunyakaa for the Poets Out Loud Prize and published by Fordham

University, and his second collection, *Dragging the Lake*, was published by Carnegie Mellon. Robert has received a poetry fellowship from the NEA and a Pushcart Prize. His poems have appeared in *Gulf Coast*, *Field*, *The Iowa Review*, *New England Review*, *Poetry*, *The Southern Review*, and many others.

CHARLES HARPER WEBB'S latest book, *Brain Camp*, was published by the University of Pittsburgh Press in 2015. *A Million MFAs Are Not Enough*, a book of essays on contemporary American poetry, is forthcoming from Red Hen Press in 2016. Recipient of grants from the Whiting and Guggenheim foundations, Webb teaches creative writing at California State University, Long Beach.

SUNNI BROWN WILKINSON'S previous work has been published in *Red Rock Review*, *Rock & Sling*, *Tar River Poetry*, *Weber: the Contemporary West*, other journals and anthologies, and has been nominated for two Pushcart Prizes. She holds an MFA from Eastern Washington University and currently teaches composition and creative writing at Weber State. She lives on the east bench in Ogden with her husband and three young sons.

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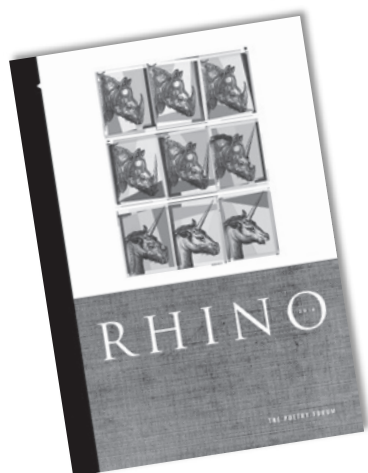
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