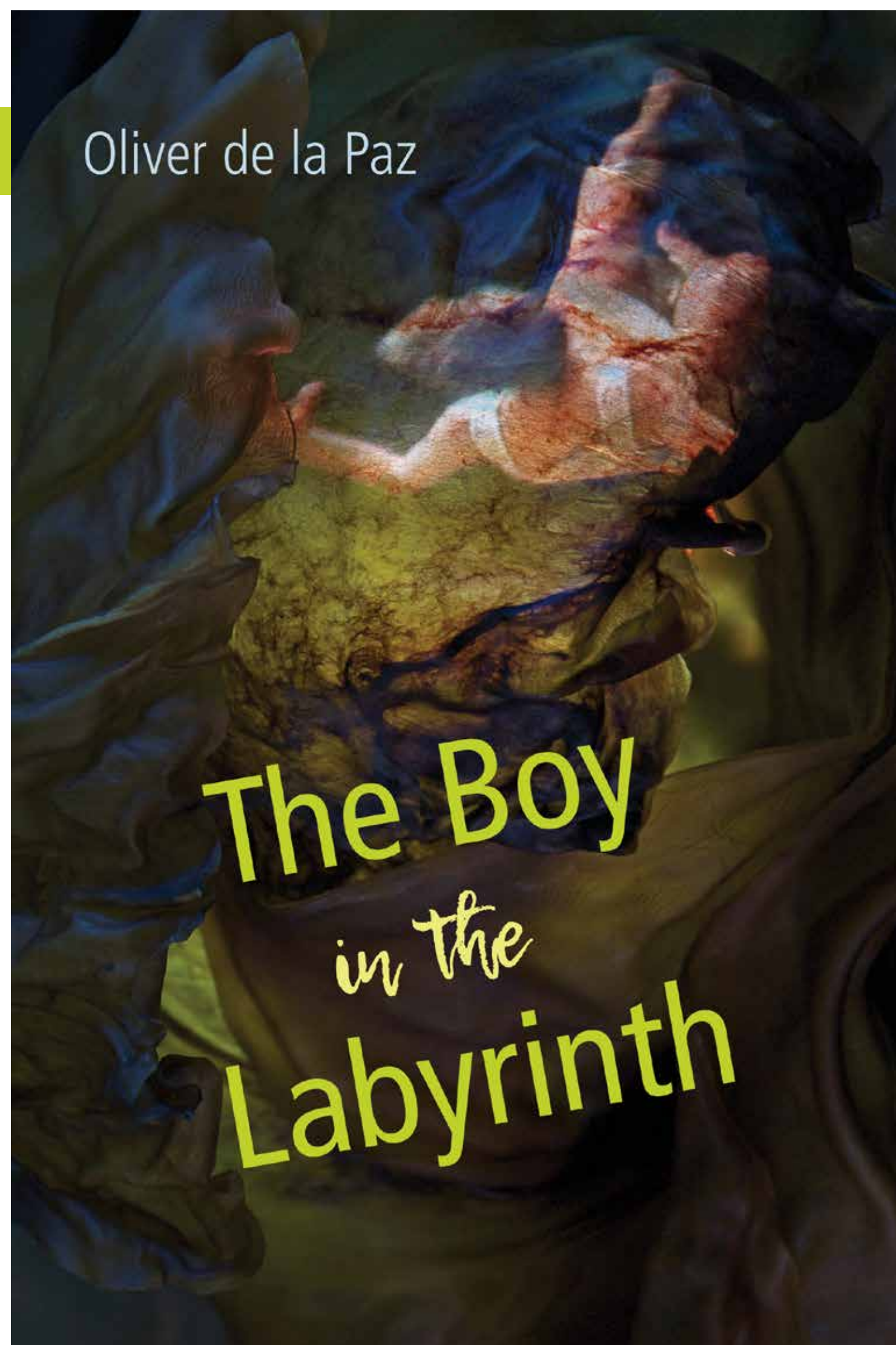


AKRON SERIES IN POETRY



POETRY CATALOG & READER 2019



THE BOY IN THE LABYRINTH

Oliver de la Paz

In a long sequence of prose poems, questionnaires, and standardized tests, *The Boy in the Labyrinth* interrogates the language of autism and the language barriers between parents, their children, and the fractured medium of science and school. Structured as a Greek play, the book opens with a parents' earnest quest for answers, understanding, and doubt. The depth of the book is told in a series of episodic prose poems that parallel the parable of Theseus and the Minotaur. Through the medium of this allusion, de la Paz meditates on failures, foundering, and the possibility of finding one's way.

Oliver de la Paz is the author of five books of poetry and coedited *A Face to Meet the Faces: An Anthology of Contemporary Persona Poetry*. A founding member of Kundiman, he teaches at the College of the Holy Cross and in the Low Residency MFA Program at Pacific Lutheran.

THE BOY IN THE LABYRINTH
OLIVER DE LA PAZ

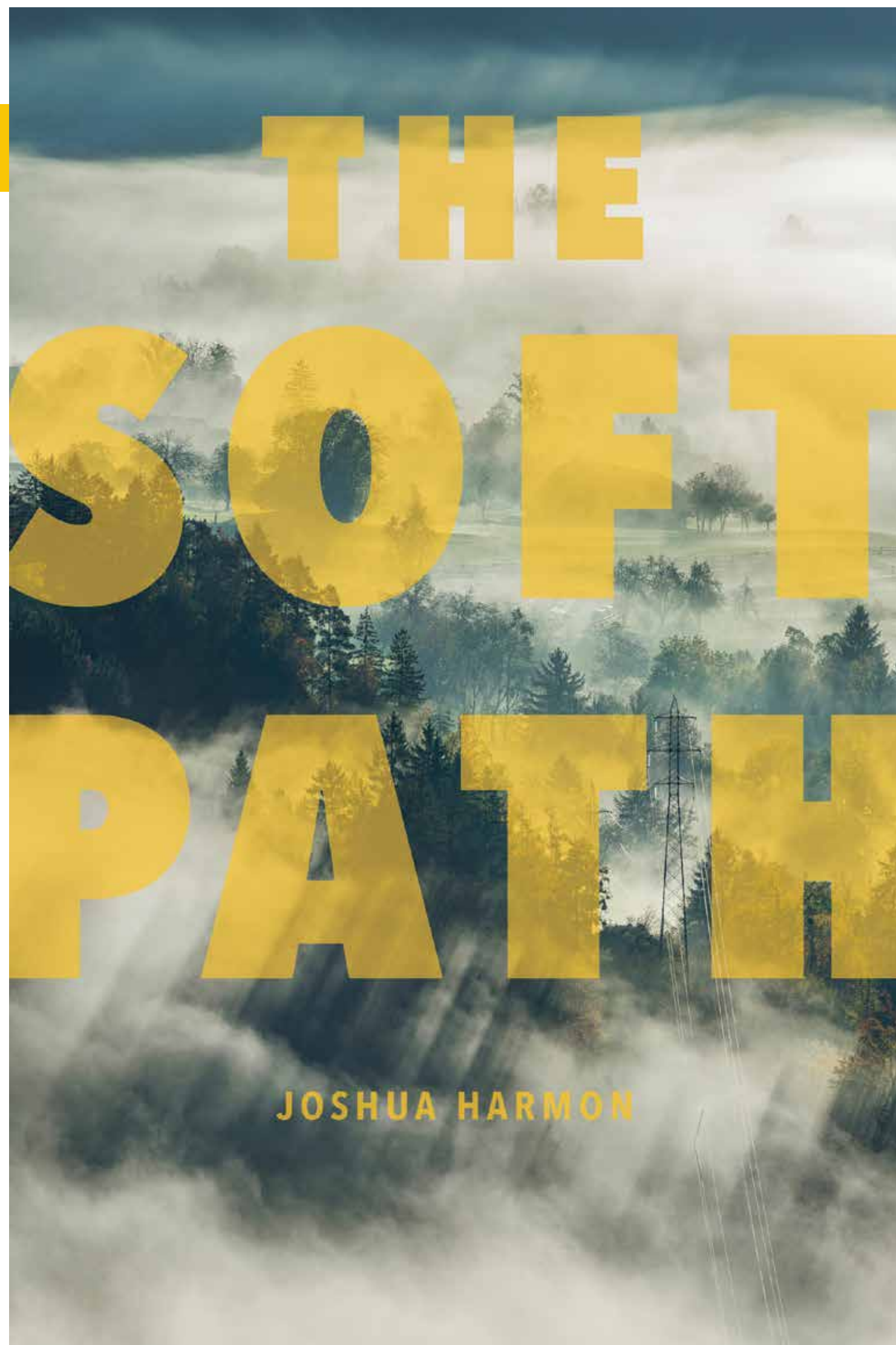
Labyrinth

The boy in the labyrinth holds a torch before him. He cannot see his shadow, which behind him swims in a somnambulant glaze. Winds tighten around the boy’s body and his torch so that the universe lowers its eye to this den beneath the earth. Blossoms of fire flit from crevasses. The boy thinks, to be guided through the labyrinth is to be guided by bodies filling with light. The universe thinks, there are the stars. There and there and there.

Book and Order Info:

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THE SOFT PATH

Joshua Harmon

The Soft Path, which takes its title from a 1970s term promoting an alternative energy future, appraises the “unreconciled / losses” of a world remade in the relentless interests of capital, a world “revelatory in its / diminishment.” Written where landscape bleeds into soundscape, where ecopoetics collides with technopoetics, this book speaks from the fragmented space of machine learning to “memory’s residue,” in a voice that recalls American predecessors Oppen, Niedecker, and Ammons. *The Soft Path* continues Harmon’s exploration of both the serial poem and the long poem, from the small-but-systemic breakdowns of “Cascading Failures” to the epic commuting road song of the nearly 1500-line “Horizontal Dropouts.”

Joshua Harmon is also the author of the poetry collections *Le Spleen de Poughkeepsie* (winner of the 2010 Akron Poetry Prize) and *Scape*, as well as the essay collection/memoir *The Annotated Mixtape*, the novel *Quinnehtukqut*, and the short fiction collection *History of Cold Seasons*. He lives in western Massachusetts.

from CASCADING FAILURES

Snow against wind
-shield and snow, wind

-smoothed and -compressed
from undiminishing

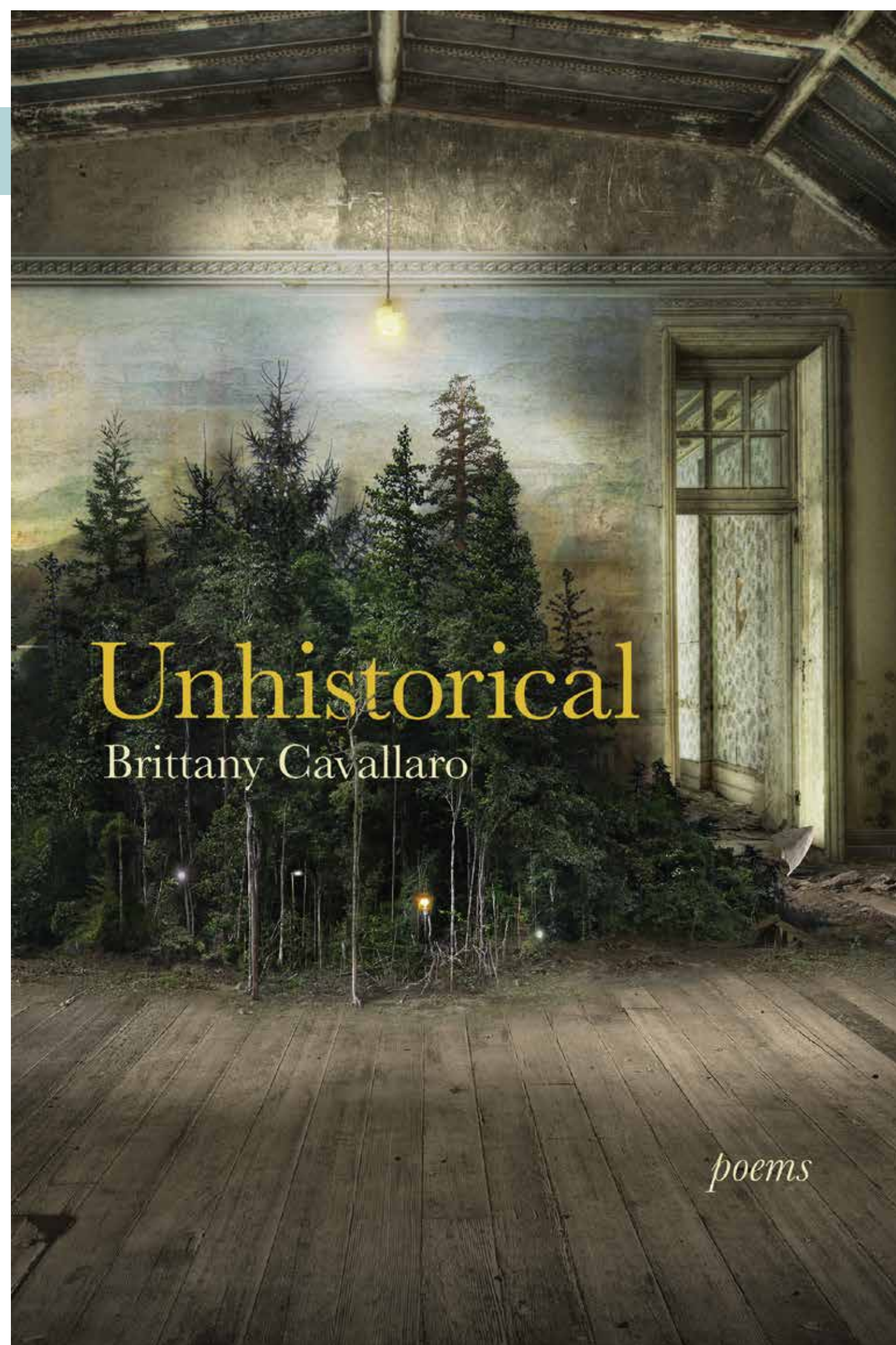
source: snow’s thirty-two
-feet-per-second-squared
low-tech sabotage

fixes me, hill
-middled amid head
-lit, highbeamed glitter:

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UNHISTORICAL

Brittany Cavallaro

Unhistorical draws on historical narrative, confessional poetry, and detective fiction to tell the story of a contemporary romantic relationship that begins in Scotland and falls apart in America, as the narrator finds herself in the role of spectator to her partner's genius. Many of these poems draw from the elegiac tradition, following a speaker who is, at turns, tourist in and historian of a landscape that is foreign to them.

Brittany Cavallaro is the author of *Girl-King*, which was an Editor's Choice for the Akron Poetry Prize and was published by University of Akron Press in 2015, as well as the *New York Times* bestselling author of the Charlotte Holmes series for young adults. Her poems have appeared in *AGNI*, *The Southern Review*, and *Tin House*, among other journals. She is the recipient of fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Vermont Studio Center, and scholarships from the Bread Loaf Writers Conference. She is an instructor of creative writing at the Interlochen Arts Academy.

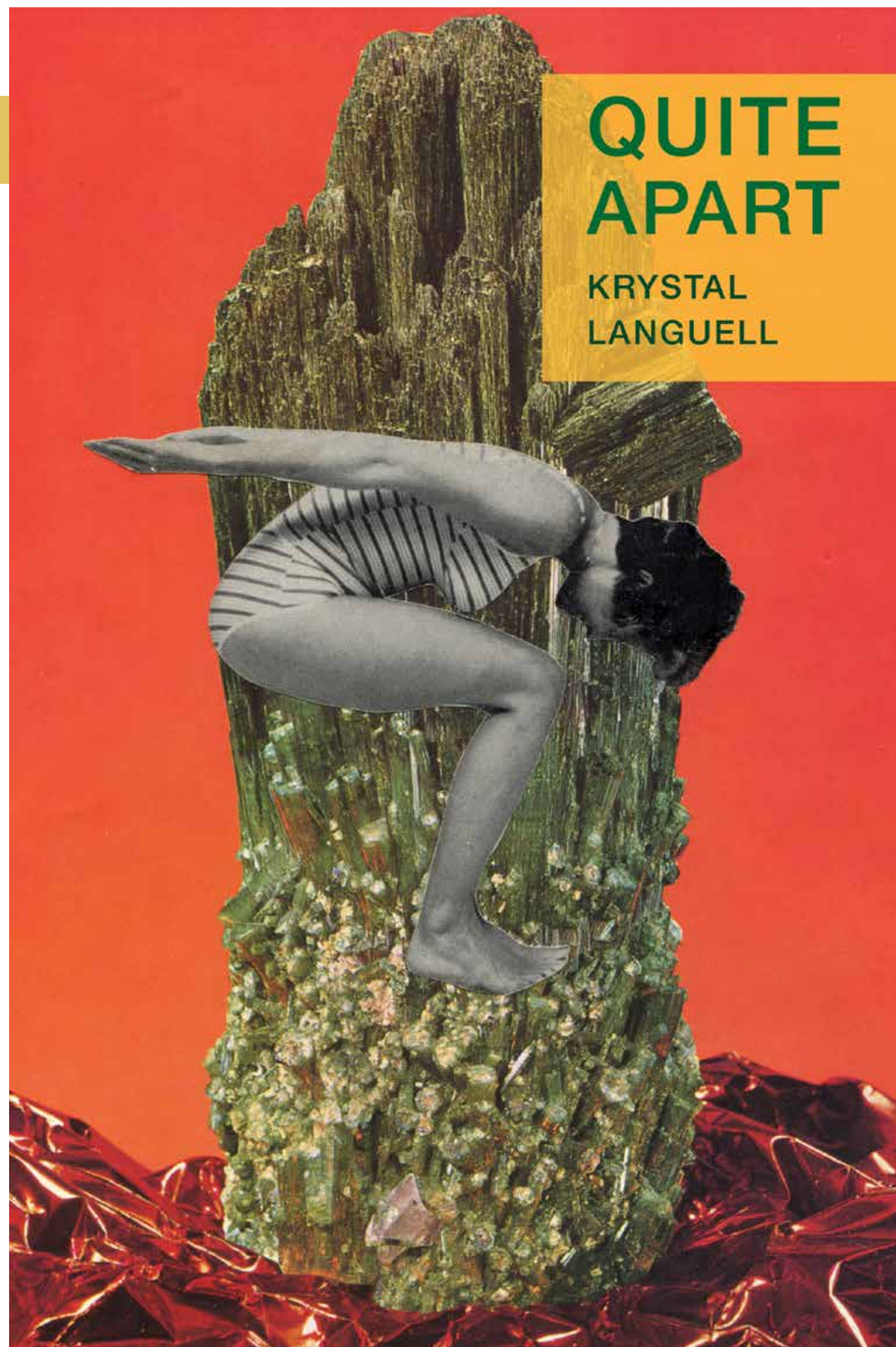
A GATE

It originates at the detail,
the hinge of the door
to the museum. Not the landscape
or the figure that might be
art, might be a coin-collector,
maybe both. How you’ve taken us
to twenty such places
in the name of teaching me.
The titles were always better
than their canvases, all that
blank sincerity. Their voices—
if voiced—would spiral up
into sincerity, and I never
liked a sound for what it signified.
I lost you in the impressionists.
Found the gate to the pleasure-garden
behind the museum. There, I named
no flowers, no birds. Let the world
be a worse sketch, left untitled.

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QUITE APART

Krystal Languell

Quite Apart asks “what about after survival?” in a chronicle of attempts to have a heart in a rough world. Haunted by work and its wasted hours, the book offers a glimpse of self-rendered as subtext beneath the sheen of productivity. Inventive formal poems provide a kind of alibi, mirroring the inflexibility of the environment—driving through mountains, bleeding in alleys, losing keys in a bar parking lot—to allow some emotion to pass through, tenderness intact.

Krystal Languell lives in Chicago, where she works for the Poetry Foundation. Her previous books are *Call the Catastrophists* (BlazeVox, 2011) and *Gray Market* (1913 Press, 2016). She has also published six chapbooks, including *Be a Dead Girl* (Argos Books, 2014) and *Archive Theft*, a collection of interviews, (Essay Press, 2015). A NYSCA/NYFA 2017 Artist Fellowship Finalist in Poetry, she previously completed a 2014-15 Lower Manhattan Cultural Council workspace residency and a 2013-14 Poetry Project Emerge-Surface-Be fellowship.

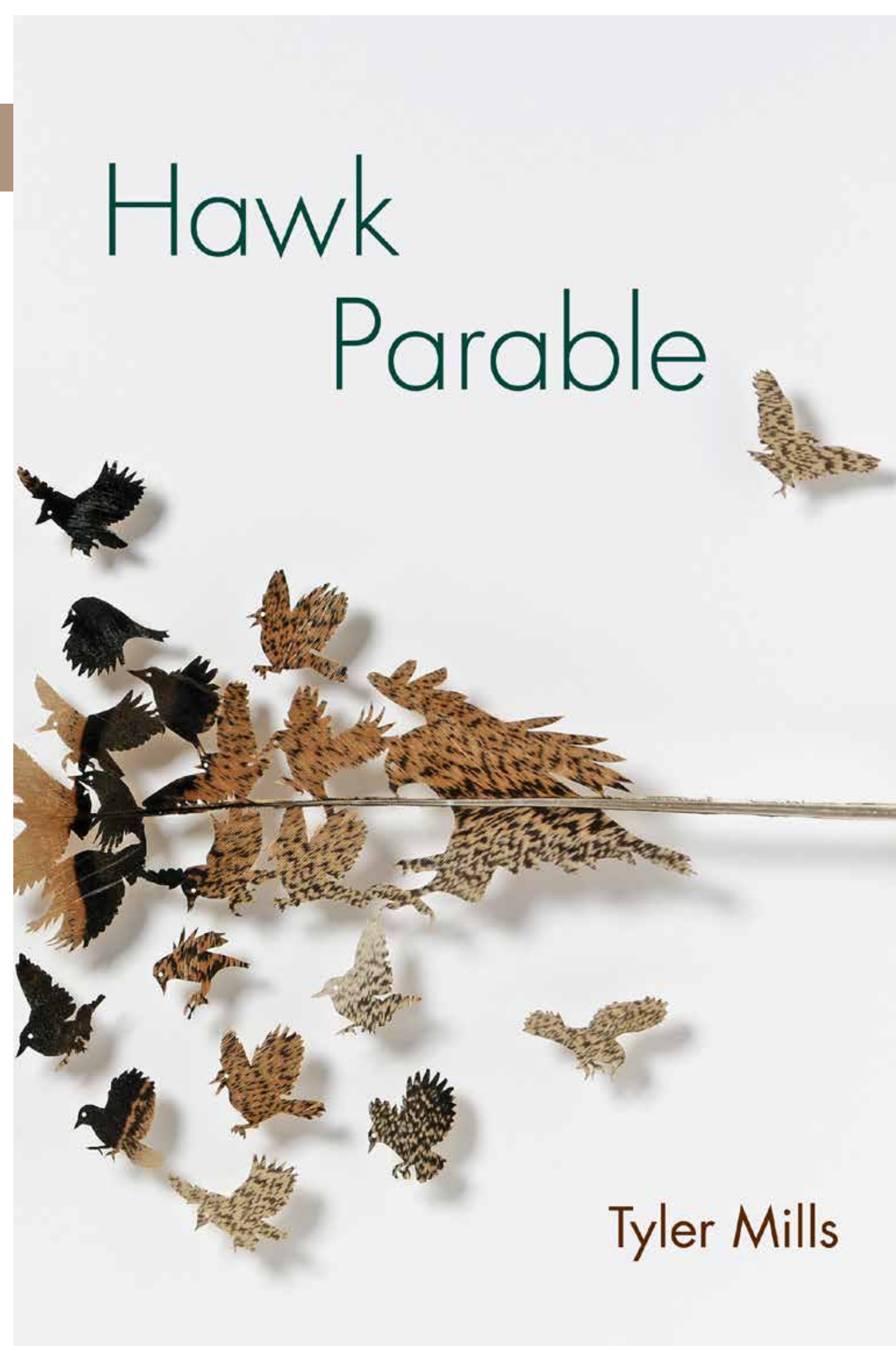
Poem for My Friend in Ohio

I am glad you were not found in a
pit this morning or any other morning
beneath the shed of a troubled white man
in your state. I am glad that we, you and I,
only get groped on the street or
masturbated at on the NJ Transit bus,
that we are alive and not buried and
not buried alive, at least not by dirt,
a shed, that man.

Book and Order Info:

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HAWK PARABLE

Tyler Mills

Hawk Parable begins with a family mystery and engages with the limits of historical knowledge—particularly of the atomic bombs the US dropped at the end of the Second World War and the repercussions of atomic tests the US conducted throughout the twentieth century. These poems explore a space between environmental crisis and a crisis of conscience.

Tyler Mills is the author of two books of poems, *Hawk Parable* (winner of the 2017 Akron Poetry Prize) and *Tongue Lyre* (winner of the 2011 Crab Orchard Series in Poetry First Book Award). The recipient of residencies from Yaddo, Ragdale, and the Vermont Studio Center, and scholarships/fellowships from Bread Loaf and Sewanee, the Chicago native is an assistant professor at New Mexico Highlands University, editor-in-chief of *The Account*, and a resident of Santa Fe, New Mexico.

HAWK PARABLE

TYLER MILLS

Dream of the Morning Before It Split Open

I almost see your thumb
following the groove
like a river on an atlas.

The plane won't be parked long.
You chip a stone out
of the tire, your mind

waking up as light
patterns the palms.
Men peer from the slits

of tents as though through ash,
their eyes opening
in a pan of photographic fixer.

What will you see from the bottom
bulb of glass? The warp of August
sun metalling the waves?

You turn toward your name
as though your father called you
back. You step under the wing of it.

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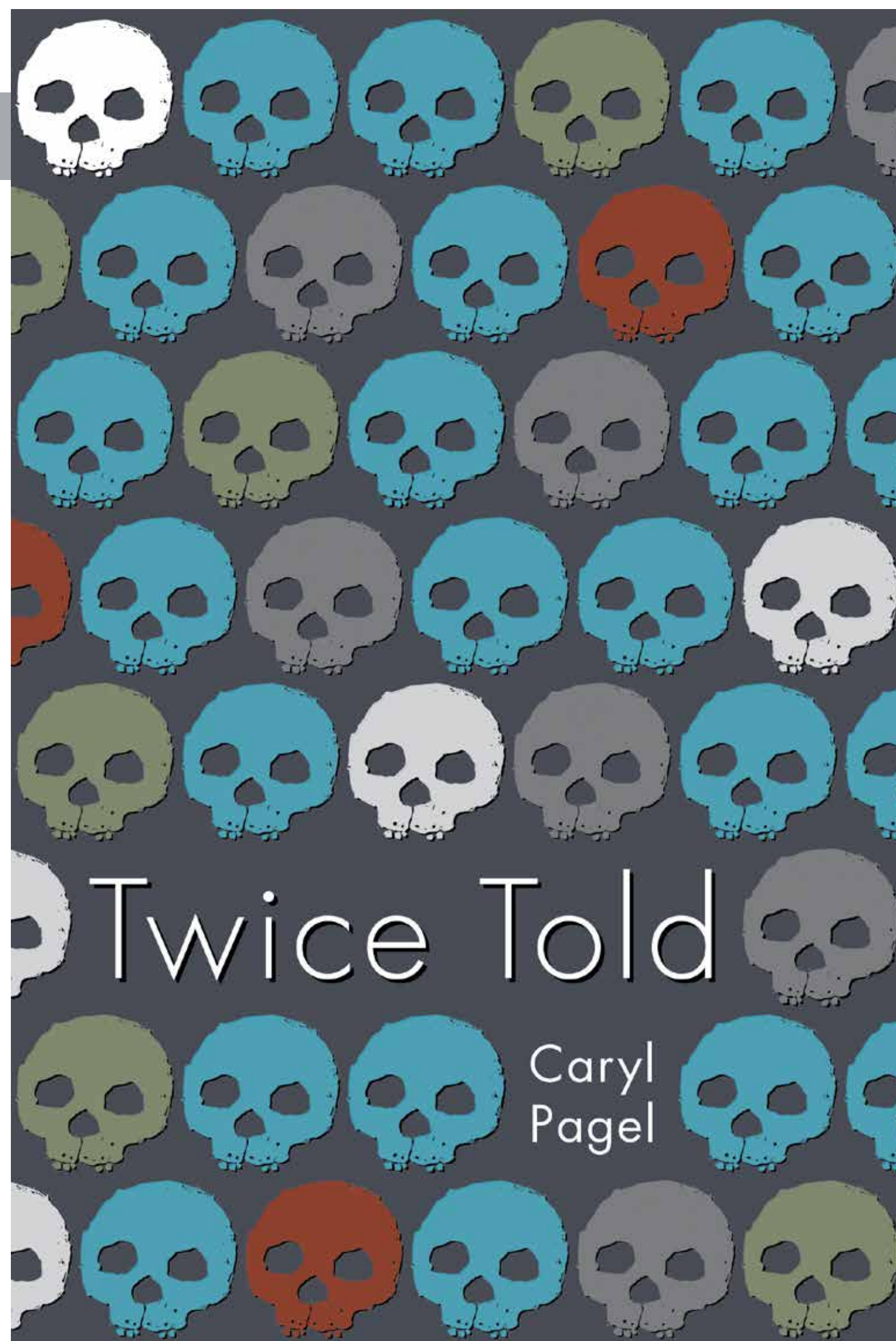
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TWICE TOLD

Caryl Pagel

The poems in *Twice Told* roam through Midwest and western landscapes haunted by shards of nineteenth-century gothic novels, war stories, warnings, and the ghosts of known and imagined lovers, mothers, soldiers, trainmates, and mistresses. These are poems interested in narrative framing, repetition, rumor, humor, and hearsay; poems that loop back in on themselves as they compulsively repeat the details of furious, apparitional pasts—implicating both teller and reader in their impacts.

Caryl Pagel is the author of two collections of poetry, *Twice Told* and *Experiments I Should Like Tried at My Own Death*. Her essays have appeared in *AGNI*, *The Collagist*, *Entropy*, *Essay Press*, *Wave Composition*, and *The Mississippi Review*. Caryl is the co-founder and editor of Rescue Press and the director of the Cleveland State University Poetry Center. She is an assistant professor at Cleveland State University, where she teaches poetry and nonfiction in the NEOMFA program.

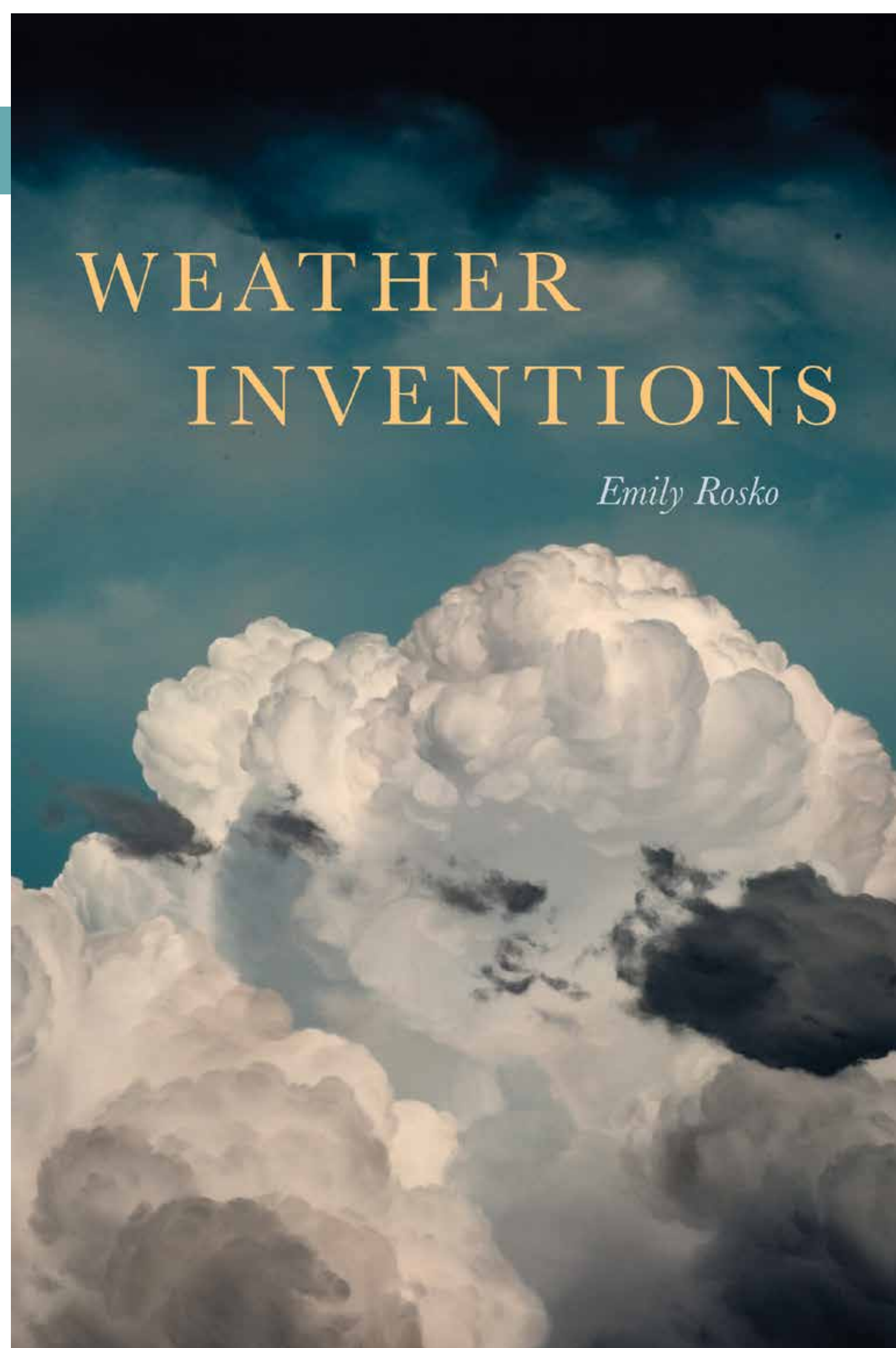
Ghost Towns

There is not a name for
how you felt in the meantime
There is not a name for
what you would most like to
hide How are you supposed to
explain it if there is no
name A name is what you
need to become a little less
invisible A name is what you
need to die But what if
you have no stake in this
decrepit town No title or claim
to your one own only cause

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WEATHER INVENTIONS

Emily Rosko

The poems in Rosko's third collection capture an enduring sense of wonder in the face of nature alongside the scientific impulse to observe and measure. At turns evasive and earnest, erudite and unguarded, researched and unbooked, the poems in Rosko's *Weather Inventions* chart humanity's enduring attachments to weather in science and art.

Emily Rosko is the author of two previous poetry collections: *Prop Rockery*, winner of the 2011 Akron Poetry Prize, and *Raw Goods Inventory*, winner of the 2005 Iowa Poetry Prize. She has been the recipient of the Stegner and Ruth Lilly fellowships. Editor of *A Broken Thing: Poets on the Line* (University of Iowa Press, 2011), she also is the poetry editor for *Crazyhorse*. She is associate professor of English at the College of Charleston.

Reverdie

Call back spring and the migrations
of birds. Winter has sheared
down the birches to kindling
and ash, but from the gray
the new green budding. Call
back the spring, if spring
is still a season: zephyr winds
to calm the northerlies, the ground
defrosting and opening
to dew. Spiders spin
their filthy lacey
strings. Spring unrolls
a muddy field: the fecundity
of clay, golden pollen
sensualizing the air. Shower-burst
and thickened xylems. The up-
thrusted oozing nectar
sweetening the ongoing
infidelities of the bees. We'll
lie in the meadow, press flesh-
to-flesh against the damp warming
dirt, next to the earthworm
deconstructing all remains.
The grass unstitches to seed. Sky
a misted gauze that makes
no promise for what's planted or buried.

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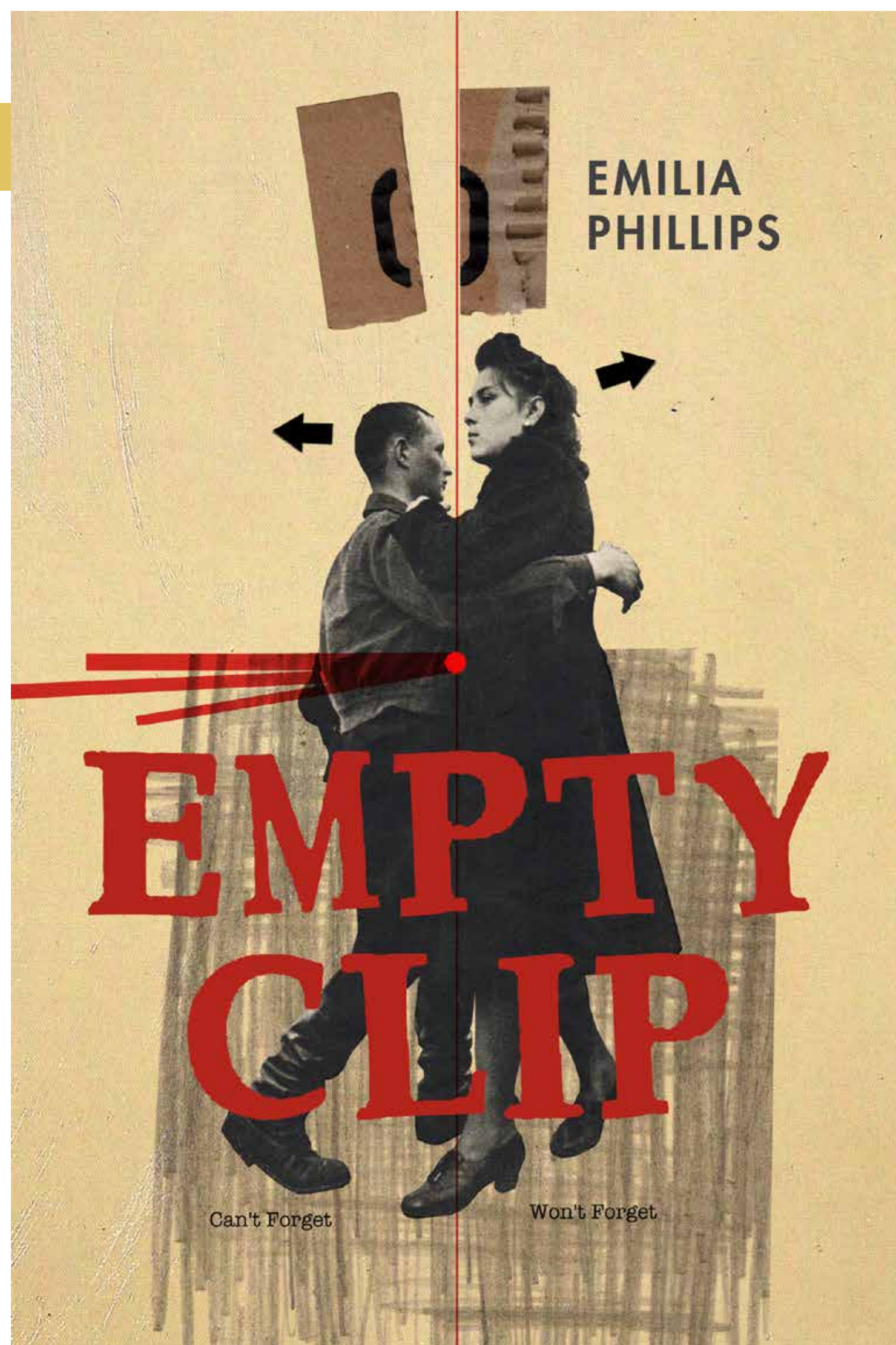
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EMPTY CLIP

Emilia Phillips

The poems of *Empty Clip* bore into the cultures of violence in the United States while candidly cross-firing upon the poet's complicity and testifying on these cultures' effects upon female body image and mental health. Emilia Phillips's third poetry collection sears with the "angry love" of self, in order to find some truth that's nevertheless "a broken bone that can't be / set."

Emilia Phillips is the author of two other poetry collections from the University of Akron Press, *Signaletics* (2013) and *Groundspeed* (2016), and three chapbooks. Her poems and lyric essays appear widely in literary publications including *Agni*, *Boston Review*, *Ploughshares*, *Poetry*, and elsewhere. She's an assistant professor in the MFA Writing Program and the Department of English at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

PICA OF UNSAID THINGS

Yes, I swallowed them.
Those bitter bolts rust in acidic
afterthought. This tetanus
of tautology turns my gut a copper
gangrene, a belfry
swallowed. Did you know passive
aggression is so soluble?
A soapy mouth learns other ways
to speak: homonymic hymns
of *lye* & *lie*. The awful offal
becomes my loden, stinking.
Anger uncomplicates. But I gulped
the wrong way. I am a glutton
for bile. I make drinking
songs of silence. Chugalug catgut.
& choke it back. Wolf
down this *I can't, I won't*—
this *yes, yes, I mean, don't*.

Book and Order Info:

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DOE

Aimée Baker

Doe began as Baker's attempt to understand and process the news coverage of a single unidentified woman whose body was thrown from a car leaving Phoenix, Arizona. It soon grew into a seven-year-long project with the goal to document, mourn, and witness the stories of missing and unidentified women in the United States.

Aimée Baker is a multi-genre writer with work appearing in *The Southern Review*, *Gulf Coast*, *Guernica*, *The Massachusetts Review*, and others. In 2014, she was awarded the Zoland Poetry Fellowship from the Vermont Studio Center. Baker received her MFA from Arizona State University. She currently lives in upstate New York with her husband and daughter and teaches as a lecturer at SUNY Plattsburgh, where she also serves as fiction editor for *Saranac Review*.

This is what the heart sounds like

(Beverly Sharpman, 17, missing since September 11, 1947, from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania)

At a speed she doesn’t recognize, the train leaves Philadelphia heading toward Chicago. Once on board she’ll know that it leads to someplace other. She’ll have her suitcase tucked against her knees and cash rolled tight in her pocket. Outside the window, trees will dapple the ground ebony. Hits of sunlight will drown her vision red like a pricked finger.

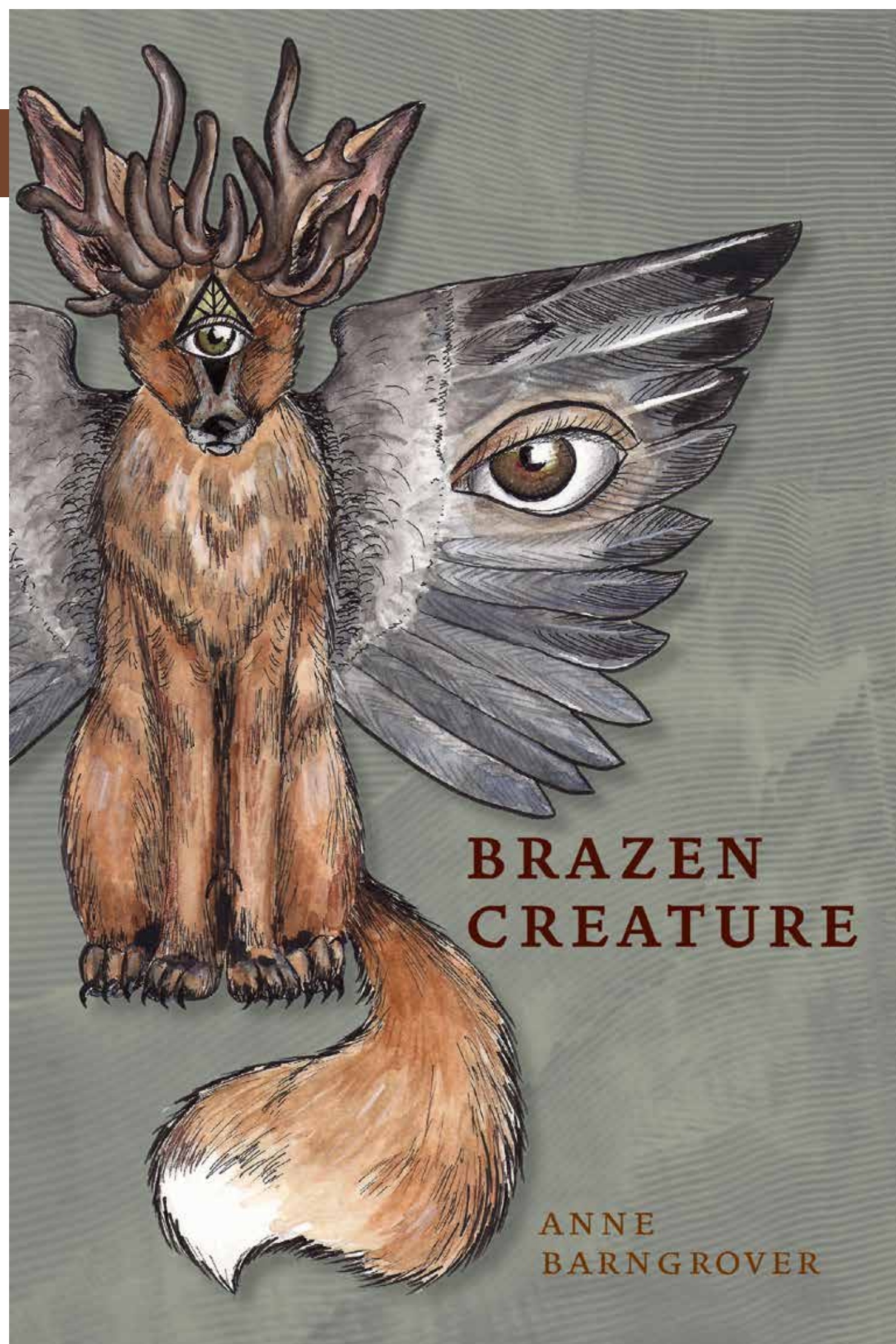
Before she leaves, she will try to say what this thing is that drives her to the station late that morning. In front of a mirror, with her skin pulled tight over her cheekbones, it will be the sound of the hutsmen that sends her running. That man with a knife and a promise to bring back beauty.

She’ll love him, the stranger that smelled of forest and the hart he brought down to fill a lie. Those lies, those simple untruths about where he’s been to hide that he found the quiet girl. On the train she’ll finally know what love makes of us. There will be a shadow lodged in her chest that stutters in time to the sound of metal on metal.

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BRAZEN CREATURE

Anne Barngrover

Brazen Creature spans a young woman's awakening. The poems' concerns are twofold: violence against women and girls that has become rooted in the land, and verdant female desire and self-assertion in the face of entrenched oppression.

Anne Barngrover is the author of *Yell Hound Blues* (Shipwreckt Books, 2013) and coauthor, with poet Avni Vyas, of the chapbook *Candy in Our Brains* (CutBank, 2014). Her poems have appeared in *Ecotone*, *Crazyhorse*, *Copper Nickel*, *Indiana Review*, and others. Anne earned her MFA from Florida State University and her PhD from The University of Missouri. She is an assistant professor of creative writing at Saint Leo University and lives in Tampa, Florida.

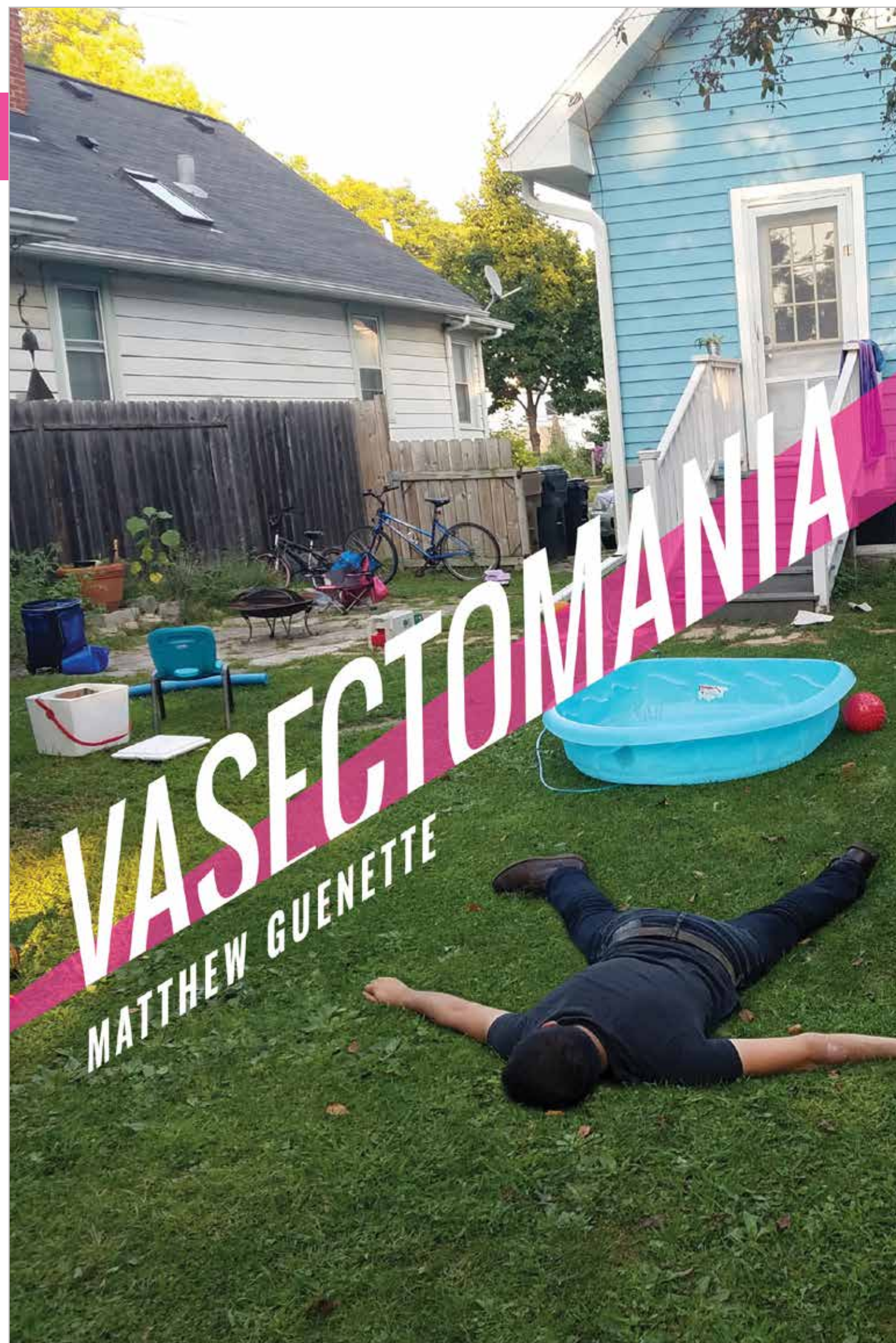
Finding Out the Lie One Year Later

After my friends and I set off bottle rockets into the trees,
my hair smells like gunpowder, and I don't want to wash it away.
I am no stranger to impulsivity. How good it felt to seize
a glass of wine and throw it, to use my mouth on him and betray
what little dignity I had left, to make him stay another night
even when he told me that he was bad and I just made him worse.
I can smell his memory on me as I walk past aching streetlights
that hang their necks in shame. Cowards. In my dreams, cursed,
he appears and asks if I still wanted what broke
all those years ago. How can I say I want shrieking lines of fire?
He wants a chimney cowl, a curved stone. I want smoke
thick as color in blue and white and gold. And I'd be a liar
tonight if I didn't wonder: before fireworks were shaped like flowers,
if one woman ever thought to make them weapons, and how.

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VASECTOMANIA

Matthew Guenette

In his third collection, Matthew Guenette continues to explore work and class, this time from the perspective of a narrator who is perpetually—and outrageously—on the run. These voice-driven and formally inventive poems yearn and shout, tremble in a delirium of parenting and partnering, and thrash with humor and a blue collar sensibility.

Matthew Guenette received an MFA from Southern Illinois University. He is the author of two previous poetry collections: *American Busboy* (University of Akron Press, 2011) and *Sudden Anthem* (Dream Horse Press, 2008) as well as a chapbook, *Civil Disobedience* (Rabbit Catastrophe Press, 2017). Recent work has appeared in *Forklift: Ohio*, *Spoon River Poetry Review*, *Sou'wester*, *Southern Indiana Review*, and *TYPO*. He lives in Madison, WI, and teaches composition and creative writing at Madison College.

Roughneck Twine

The epic way I rolled out of bed this morning.
The thrilling, emotionally moving way
I went downstairs and fixed cereal for the kids.

It was all so intense. . . . It was all so complex. . . .
The way we brushed our teeth,
the way I kneeled at the tub and washed

my ridiculous hair. Whatever the great
philosophers ponder, surely it was there,
out in the yard, where the kids

had urged me on with sticks to witness
the action of the ripening berries, the deep-seeded
symbolism of the beans

planted weeks ago, now finally winding
with flair up the twine. The roughneck twine
strung on the villainous fence

of flawless one-liners. The no-holds-barred.
The pathos. The commando, die-
hard way I loaded the kids in the car

and aimed us towards the day. Big trouble
and little troubles. The stuff of experience
blowing up all around as I drove them to school.

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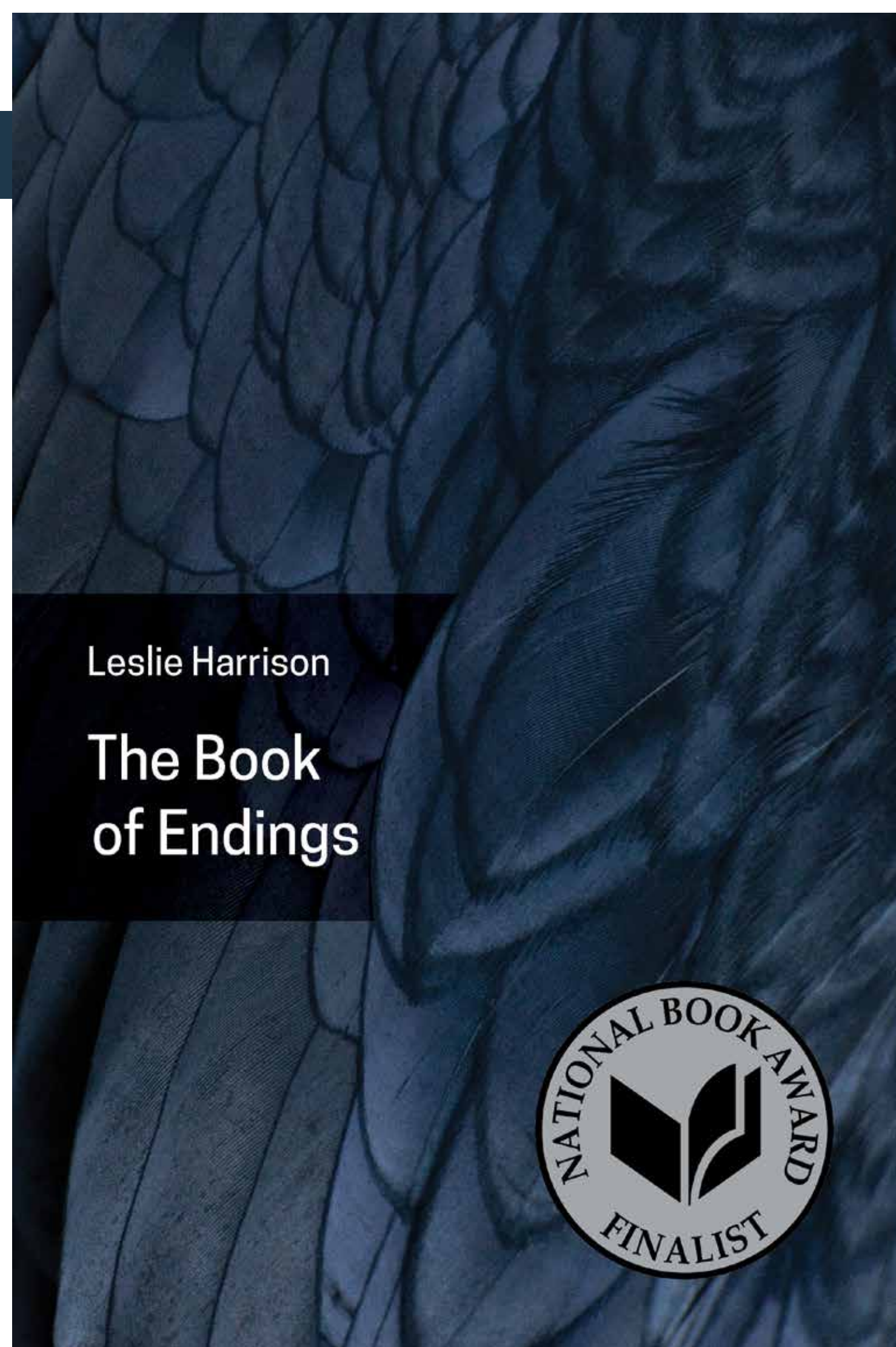
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THE BOOK OF ENDINGS

Leslie Harrison

The poems in *The Book of Endings* try to make sense of, or at least come to some kind of reckoning with absence—the death of the author’s mother, the absence of the beloved, the absence of an accountable god, cicadas, the dead stars arriving, the dead moon aglow in the night sky.

Leslie Harrison is the author of *The Book of Endings* and *Displacement* (Mariner Books, 2009). She holds graduate degrees from Johns Hopkins University and University of California, Irvine. Poems have appeared in journals including *Poetry*, *New Republic*, *Kenyon Review*, *FIELD*, *Subtropics*, *Pleiades*, *Orion*, and elsewhere. In 2011 she was awarded a fellowship in literature from the National Endowment for the Arts. In the fall of 2012 she joined the full-time faculty at Towson University.

2017 National Book Award Finalist, Poetry

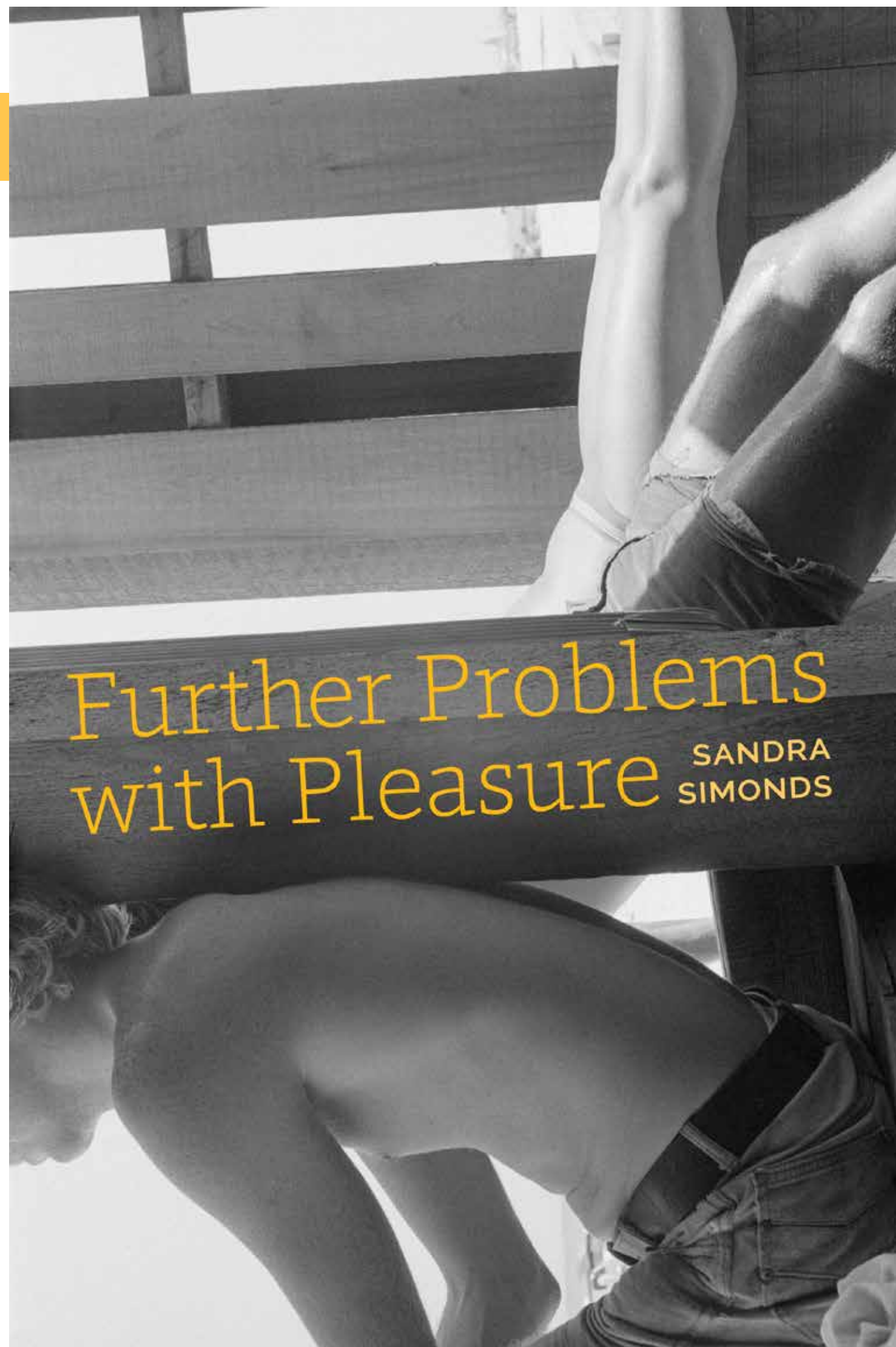
[Snowfields]

And I wonder sprawled on the curved recurved back
of the hill the towers of clouded sky crushing the horizon
flat I want to know how to strip the griefstorm from the flesh
flense the spirit scrape it down to the clean bone unbreaking
make it take in stride another raw dawn these days of snow
on cold on frozen take in stride this place of glass and ice
this place knit stitched pierced by the shadows of all those
departed birds begin again to assemble linens pillows
blankets scarves the small soft comforts cushions cradles
learn how to lay me down in something other than danger
other than fury ice and risk learn to stop dropping this body
into snowfields making these empty shapes learn to stop
waiting for them to be filled

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FURTHER PROBLEMS WITH PLEASURE

Sandra Simonds

“If Coleridge, Plath, Ovid, and Celan started a love commune where they built a manifesto Molotov cocktail out of the pastoral, eros, blank verse, and kitsch: it would be this book. A true original, thrilling in her brash complex feminism and virtuosic in sound and line, Simonds writes of the lives and desires trod upon by late capitalism and poetry.”

—Carmen Giménez Smith, 2015 Akron Poetry Prize judge

Sandra Simonds is the author of several collections of poetry including *Steal It Back* (Saturnalia Books, 2015), *The Sonnets* (Bloof Books, 2014), *Mother Was a Tragic Girl* (Cleveland State University Poetry Center, 2012) and *Warsaw Bikini* (Bloof Books, 2009). Her poems have been anthologized in *Best American Poetry* 2014 and 2015. She is a professor of English and humanities at Thomas University in Thomasville, Georgia.

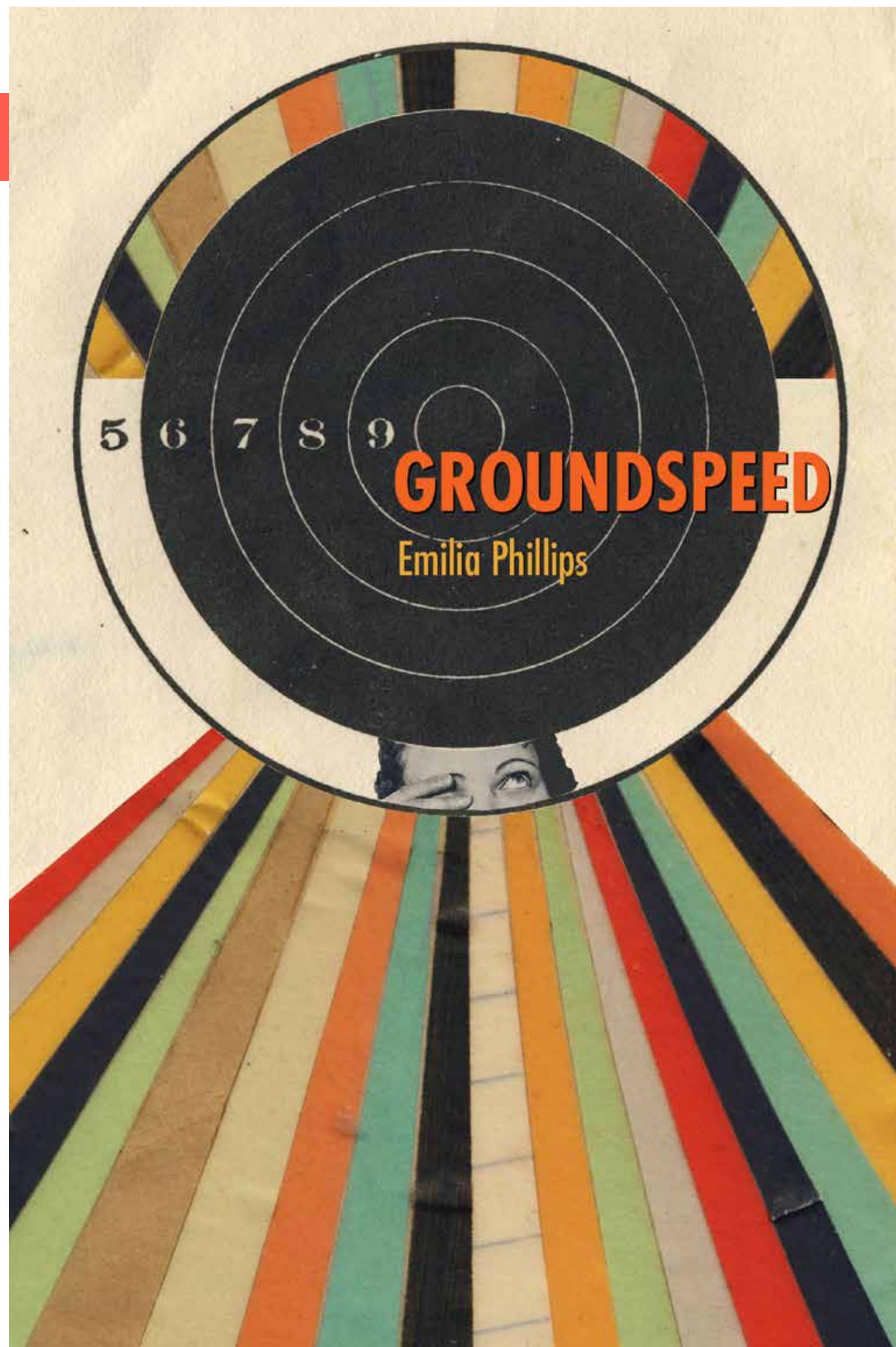
Further Problems with Pleasure

There must be some way to prolong the house.
I doubt I will ever use the word *plywood* in a poem
so there’s no way I could build anything substantial. Anyone
got a razor I haven’t shaved in over a year. I could write a hundred of these,
binge on free speech. “I am intensely attracted to you,”
he said a year later. There were monitors everywhere
and they streamed through the world like phantoms.
It induced a kind of paranoia in some but others
found comfort in it. Let me never be the one
who finds comfort in the sherbets of prison so that I can
kiss you and stay a love poet. There must
be some way to prolong the house.

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GROUNDSPEED

Emilia Phillips

Groundspeed moves and doesn't stop moving. From pastorals on American highways to self-reckonings after a cancer diagnosis to examinations on grief and transience after the death of a brother, this collection of poems asks readers not only to size up threats, but also anxieties. Phillips witnesses a small plane crash and examines roadside attractions. She reckons with sexuality after a partner asks for a threesome, and renders a candid portrait of a nude, post-surgery body in a mirror.

Emilia Phillips is the author of two other poetry collections from the University of Akron Press, *Signalitics* (2013) and *Groundspeed* (2016), and three chapbooks. Her poems and lyric essays appear widely in literary publications including *Agni*, *Boston Review*, *Ploughshares*, *Poetry*, and elsewhere. She's an assistant professor in the MFA Writing Program and the Department of English at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

GROUNDSPPEED

EMILIA PHILLIPS

Strata

After a dig archaeologists toss something of this
world in the backfill so later excavations aren't
nuanced by earlier efforts: a water bottle, Lay's
bag; at Hisarlık, a joke, a Trojan in its chintzy foil.

The object not *of*, but *now* & ordinary, indelible.
All the great finds then must be marked
by the out-of-context. A walking stick dropped
in terror or awe by a laborer at Lintong, or—

tune in to the image of Howard Carter's revolver
in its final resting place a km outside Tutankhamen's. Soon
the new archaeologists will dig for the old archaeologists,
their Timexes, travel Scrabble tiles & ink wells, & unopened

cans of beer or beans, popped footballs & pocket
change that mark the long catalogue of half-advances,
half-defeats in looking for gods or man, whichever
came first or last—or them between.

Book and Order Info:

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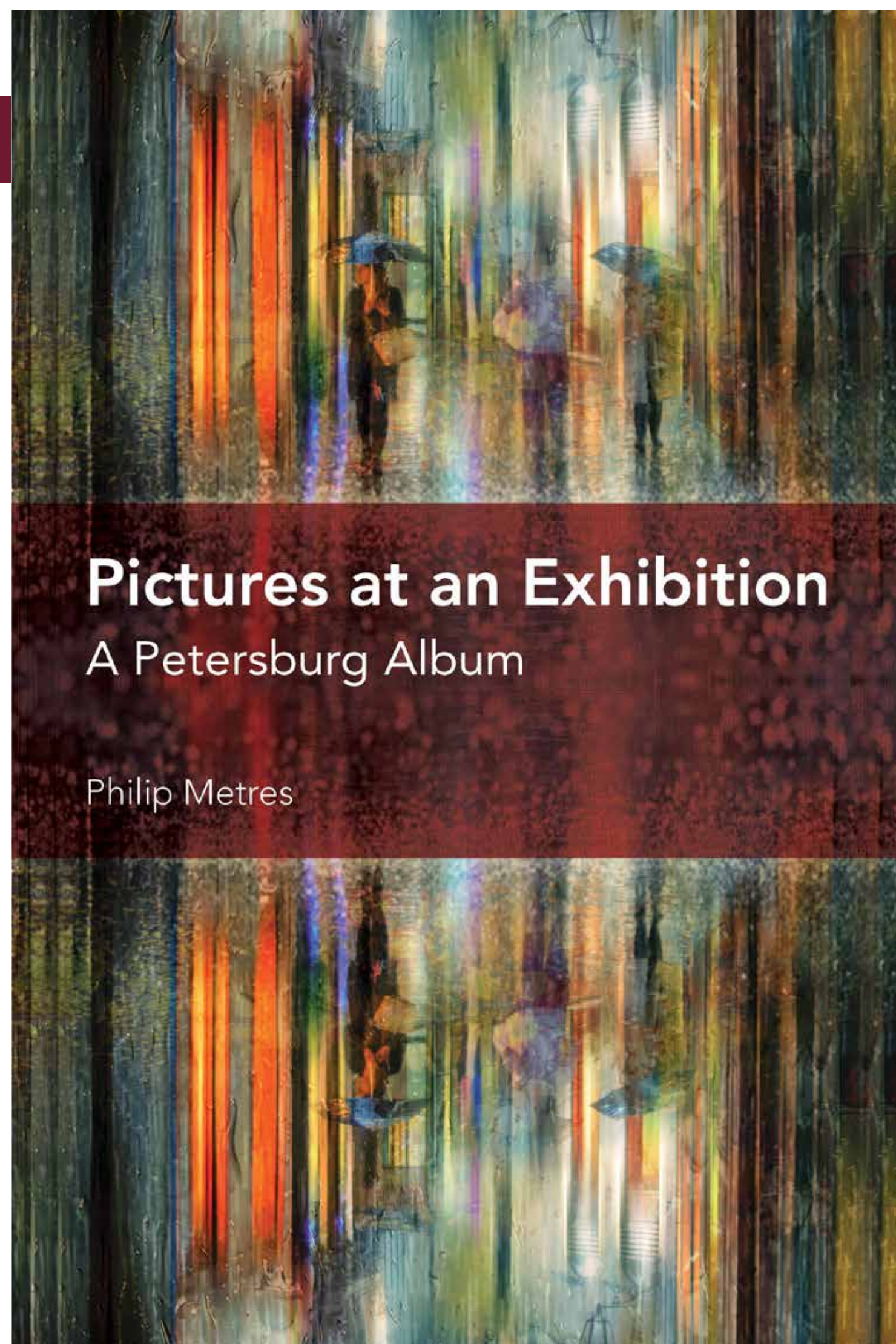
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PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION

Philip Metres

Wrestling with the questions of travel, memory, and perception, *Pictures at an Exhibition: A Petersburg Album* is, at its core, an unrequited love song to St. Petersburg. The fever dream of Peter the Great, Pushkin, Dostoyevsky, Gogol, and Akhmatova, St. Petersburg is the occasion for a broader meditation on all we come to love and lose. Scored to the movements of Modest Mussorgsky's legendary suite—a work of art elegizing a lost friend, the artist Hartmann—*Pictures* marks, and sometimes sings, the incommensurability of word and world.

Philip Metres is the author of a number of books, including *Sand Opera* (2015), *I Burned at the Feast: Selected Poems of Arseny Tarkovsky* (2015), and *Behind the Lines: War Resistance Poetry on the American Homefront since 1941* (2007). His work has garnered two NEA fellowships, five Ohio Arts Council Grants, the George W. Hunt, S.J. Prize, the Beatrice Hawley Award, two Arab American Book Awards, the Cleveland Arts Prize and the PEN/Heim Translation Fund grant. He is professor of English at John Carroll University in Cleveland.

PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION

PHILIP METRES

as if the city were a galleon:

Interlude: Three Russias

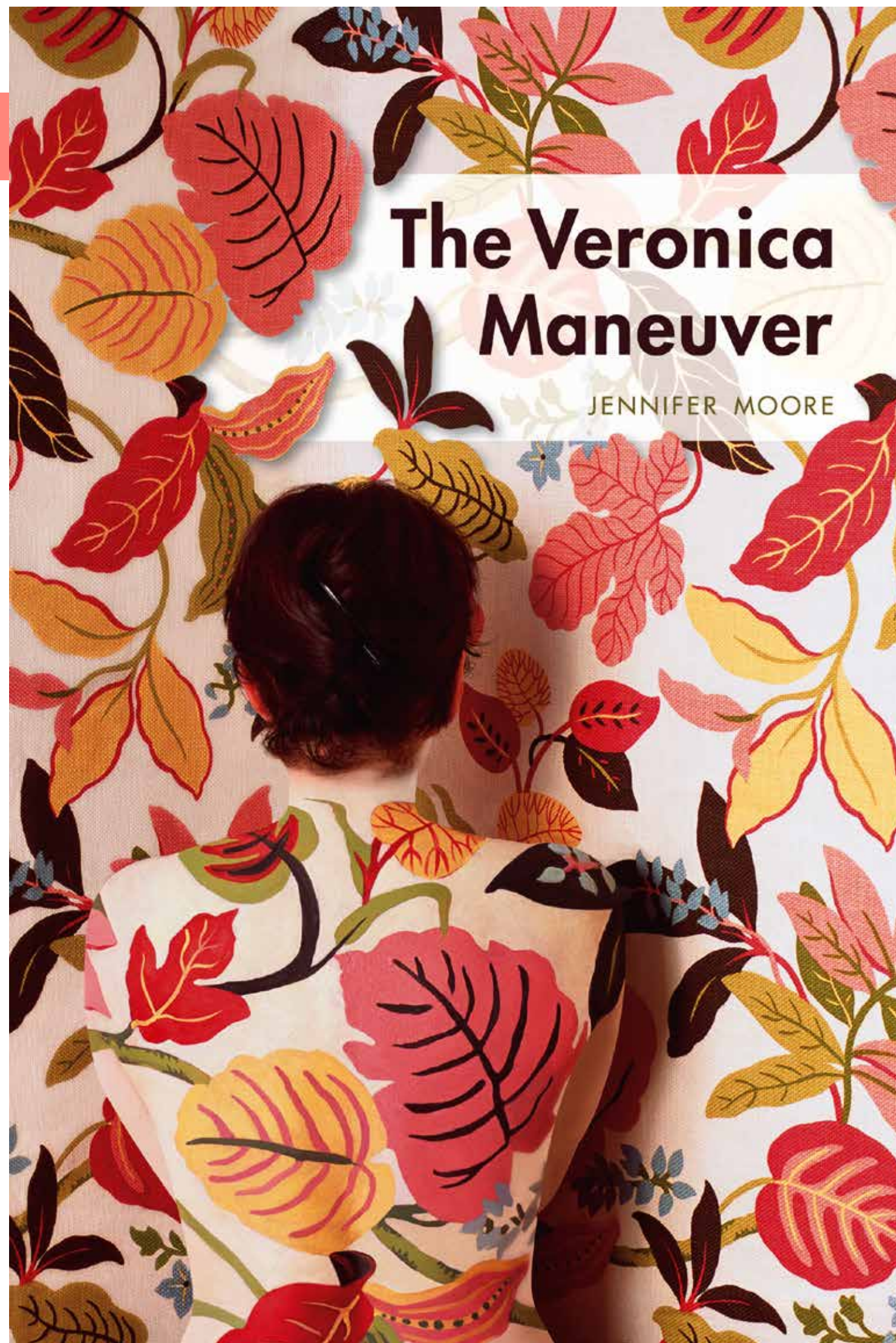
1.
A New Russian approached a girl and asked her to go out with him. She asked, “Well, do you have a two-story dacha?” “No,” he glumly replied. She asked, “Do you have a Mercedes Benz?” No, he didn’t. Dejected, he went home and asked his old man what to do. “Oh, just knock a couple stories off your dacha, trade in your limousine, and you’ll be fine.”
2.
On the train, someone asks an old pensioner how things are going. “I’m getting by,” he replied. “In the morning I don’t eat breakfast, for lunch I drink tea with a little bread, and for dinner I take something a little less heavy.”
3.
Evening was setting in, and the host offered to drive his guest home. It was a cold night, and the windshield kept icing over. Twice they almost crashed into an oncoming car, and the nervous guest advised the host to scrape off the ice. “I doubt it would help,” answered the driver, “seeing as I forgot my glasses at home.”

in the generous unbroken light

Book and Order Info:

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THE VERONICA MANEUVER

Jennifer Moore

Jennifer Moore’s debut collection takes its title from a bullfighting technique in which the matador draws the bull with his cape; in these poems, however, traditional moves are reconfigured and roles are subverted. In a broader sense, the word “veronica” (from the Latin vera, or “true” and the Greek eikon, or “image”) functions as a frame for exploring the nature of visual experience, and underscores a central question: how do we articulate events or emotions that evade clear understanding?

Jennifer Moore is the author of the chapbook *What the Spigot Said* (High5 Press). Poems have appeared in *American Letters & Commentary*, *Best New Poets*, *BODY*, *Columbia Poetry Review*, and elsewhere. A native of the Seattle area, Jennifer is an assistant professor of poetry at Ohio Northern University, where she teaches courses in creative writing, literature, and composition.

[WHEN SUNLIGHT BECOMES AN OBJECT]

When sunlight becomes an object, my echo creates a hole in sound:
a thousand doors, many handshakes of air.

Like the snapping hazel flings its yellows into the woods,
my coming and going is marked in the ear of the hearer.

When the hazel dormouse hides, she hides for months at a time.
It’s the grip of an unknown animal she fears.

But fear’s a tricky thing; at night she shreds the honeysuckle
and builds nests in the crooks of open trees.

If the big-eared bat can sing, then I was that supersonic love song.
Swinging from crag to crag, I was that blind crooning animal.

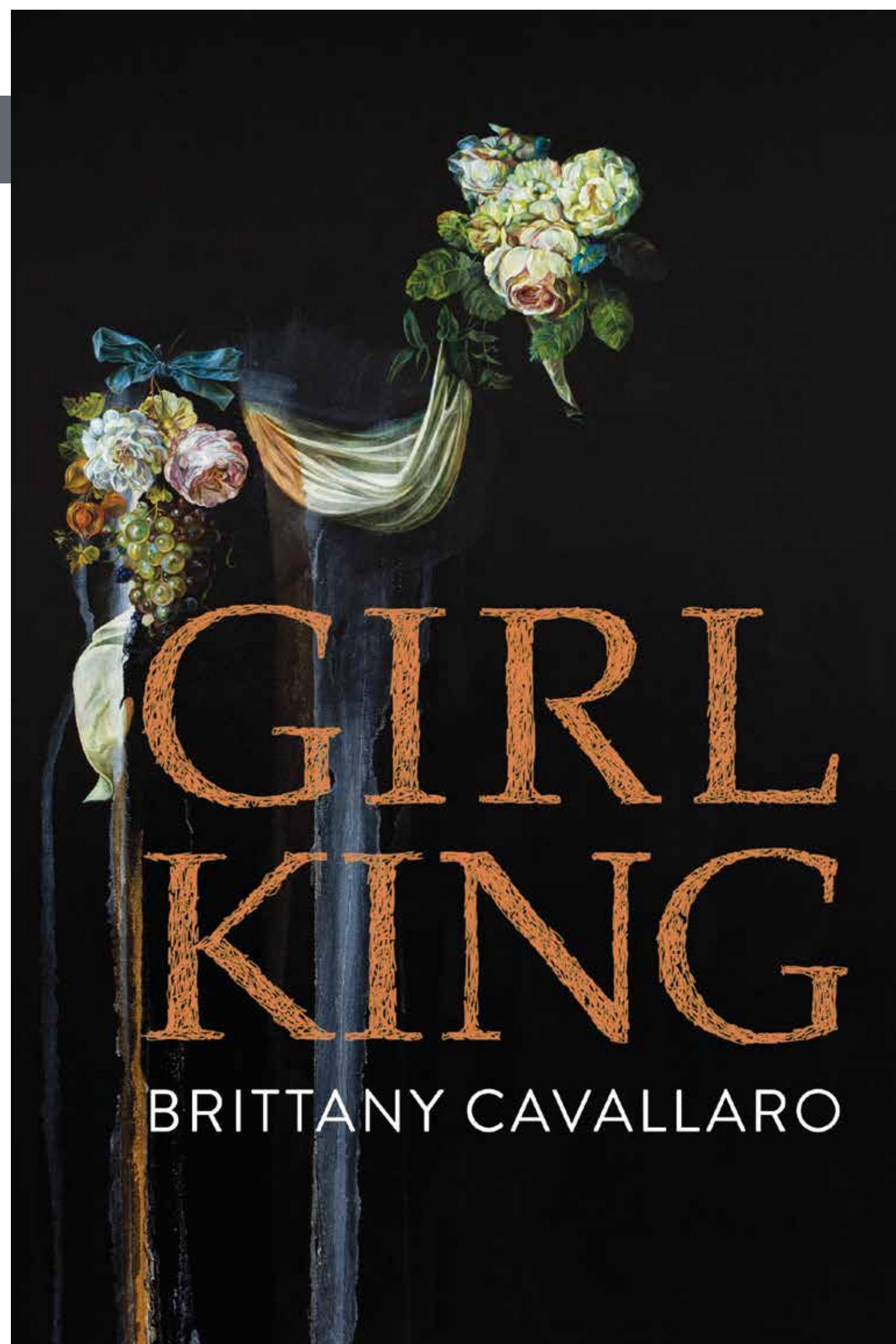
Like Lorca, I want to sleep the dream of apples.
I want the old dangers to feel welcome—

the wind displacing the fir tree, the fir tree catching on fire.
Let something burn long enough, it’ll put itself to sleep.

Book and Order Info:

62 pages | poetry | 6 X 9 inches
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GIRL-KING

Brittany Cavallaro

The poems in Brittany Cavallaro’s *Girl-King* are whispered from behind a series of masks, those of victim and aggressor, nineteenth-century madame and reluctant magician’s girl, of truck-stop Persephone and frustrated Tudor scholar. But these poems are not just interested in historical narrative: they peer, too, at the past’s marginalia, at its “blank pages” as well as its “scrawls and dashes.”

Brittany Cavallaro is the author of *Girl-King*, which was an Editor’s Choice for the Akron Poetry Prize and was published by University of Akron Press in 2015, as well as the *New York Times* best-selling author of the Charlotte Holmes series for young adults. She is the recipient of fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Vermont Studio Center, and scholarships from the Bread Loaf Writers Conference. She is an instructor of creative writing at the Interlochen Arts Academy.

At the Illinois State Fair

Pray for blackouts. For
a packed grandstand. Pray for
ex-cons and no back door.
Pray for Milwaukee men eating
turkey legs whole, who watch ours
as we climb the chairlift stairs—
pray for the heavy Clydesdale
hooves and the girl who waves
the 4-H flag. For our footsteps
swept out with the dirt. We'll spike
our shake-ups and drink them
with the safety men. I'll sever
the Spider's arms so they'll fall
around its trunk; you'll watch closely
on the ground. They know we'll ride
the Himalaya, so pray for the wrong
direction. For broken levers. For
the Alabama man to drop down
onto the console. We'll clutch our
slutty drinks. We'll stumble
to the Log Jam. Pray for frayed
seatbelts. Pray for the long drop.
Pray that tonight, when our mothers
rise from their incense blankets,
their sacrificial wine, from their shrines
winking like fairway lights, when
they look down at our waiting beds—
pray for the salt in the sheets,
for the body hollows. Pray for
their mouths, then. Pray then
for the final break.

Book and Order Info:

76 pages | poetry | 6 X 9 inches

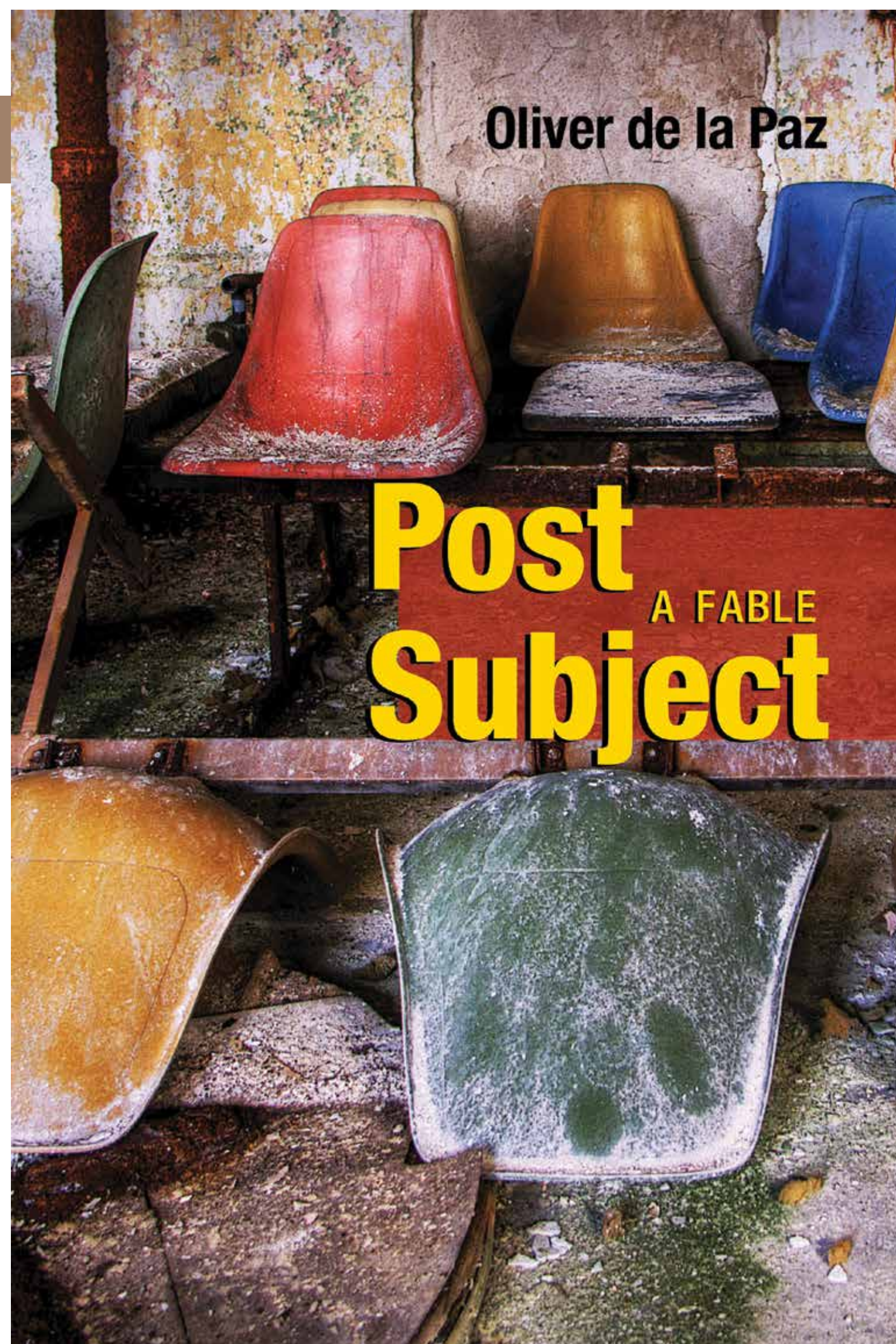
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POST SUBJECT

Oliver de la Paz

Ecstatic and obsessive, the prose poems that make up Oliver de la Paz’s *Post Subject: A Fable* reveal the monuments of a lost country. Through a series of epistles addressed to “Empire” a catalog emerges, where what can be tallied is noted in a ledger, what can be claimed is demarcated, and what has been reaped is elided. The task of deposing the late century is taken up. What’s salvaged from the remains is humanity.

Oliver de la Paz is the author of four books of poetry: *Names Above Houses*, *Furious Lullaby*, *Requiem for the Orchard*, and *Post Subject: A Fable*. He is the co-editor of *A Face to Meet the Faces: An Anthology of Contemporary Persona Poems* and the co-chair of Kundiman.org’s advisory board. He teaches creative writing in the MFA program at Western Washington University.

Dear Empire,

These are your guns. They aim elsewhere. Through clouds. Through fog. Elsewhere there are also pine trees. The spines of the needles fall in sharp clouds when it rains. But the artillery does not know this. And therefore, it must be imagined.

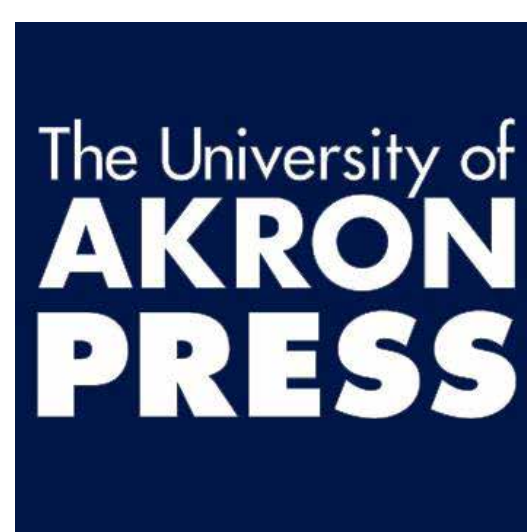
Therefore, the artist takes her brush and paints the cliffs in a way that expresses their joy. Therefore the artist sets to make something beyond a paper understanding. To make certain the pines are understood. That the kindnesses of childhood echo in a hail of gunfire.

Yet the tide seeks to take it all back. The passive bodies of jellyfish surrender themselves to movement. To gravity. To life in someone else’s music.

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