New titles and selected backlist

RED HEN PRESS

Spring 2014
“In The Meaning of Names, we find the Vogels struggling to get by on their Nebraska farm in the midst of the First World War, rising anti-German sentiment in town, and a fierce and virulent flu epidemic. Gerda and Fritz, their children, Dr. Gannoway and his wife Miranda, their friends the Baums, Father Jungels—these characters and their little town of Stuart, Nebraska, are so real, so pulsing with passion and care, that I hated to have to leave them behind. Reminiscent of Willa Cather’s My Ántonia, Shoemaker’s novel is an essential read for anyone who cares about the Midwest, about its demanding landscape, its rich and tragic history, and its remarkable, breathtaking beauty.”

—amy hassinger, author of the priest’s madonna and nina: adolescence

A consuming tale of one family’s confrontation with the violence and hatred that swept across America during the First Great War for Peace.

Stuart, Nebraska is a long way from the battlefields of Western Europe, but it is not immune to the horrors of the First Great War for Peace. Like all communities, it has lost sons and daughters to the fighting, with many more giving themselves over to the hatred only war can engender.

Set in 1918 in the farm country at the heart of America, The Meaning of Names is the story of an ordinary woman trying to raise a family during extraordinary times. Estranged from her parents because she married against their will, confronted with violence and prejudice against her people, and caught up in the midst of the worst plague the world has ever seen, Gerda Vogel, an American of German descent, must find the strength to keep her family safe from the effects of a war that threatens to consume the whole world.

ABOUT KAREN GETTERT SHOEMAKER
Karen Gettert Shoemaker is the author of Night Sounds and Other Stories (Dufour, 2002). Awards for her writing include a Nebraska Press Association Award for Feature Writing, two Independent Artist Fellowship Awards from the Nebraska Arts Council, and a Nebraska Book Award for Short Fiction. Her work has been published in a variety of newspapers and journals, including The London Independent, Prairie Schooner, Kalliope, and The South Dakota Review, andanthologized in A Different Plain: Contemporary Nebraska Fiction Writers, Times of Sorrow/Times of Grace, An Untidy Season, and Nebraska Presence: An Anthology of Poetry. She is a faculty mentor with the University of Nebraska’s MFA in Writing Program. She lives in Lincoln, Nebraska, where she and her husband own and operate Shoemaker’s Truck Stop and Travel Center.
“This book feels like going somewhere, not like reading. Pack your suitcase for traveling. Amy Schutzer has done it again: written a novel so lush with sensual, sensory detail that you enter her world and become characters’ kin. It’s an old-fashioned experience; I mean focus. Spheres of Disturbance is a book the way books were when people got lost in them, lost hours and days in pages. It’s beautiful and musical and wise and curious, like your first trip to a library: go.”

—CAROL GUESS, AUTHOR OF DOLL STUDIES: FORENSICS

A haunting, sensual, and brilliantly cunning novel about America’s impossible need to deny death.

Helen is dying. Helen is choosing to die. Over the course of one day in 1985, those who surround her—among them her daughter, an art thief, a high-strung housewife and crochet artist, a lesbian poet, and a pregnant Vietnamese pot-bellied pig—grapple with her impending end. In nine revolving points of view, they resist or accept, impact or impede the trajectories of Helen’s death in the world around them, tracing the mark of a culture that tries, desperately and impossibly, to deny death. By turns haunting, sensual, and brilliantly cunning, Spheres of Disturbance explores how we can bear to approach, or even choose, our inevitable end.

ABOUT AMY SCHUTZER
Amy Schutzer’s first novel, Undertow (Calyx Books, 2000), was a Lambda Literary Award finalist, a Violet Quill Award finalist, and a Today’s Librarian “Best of 2000” Award-winner. She is the recipient of an Astraea Foundation Grant for Fiction and a grant from the Barbara Deming Memorial Fund. Finishing Line Press published Taking the Scarecrows Down, a chapbook, in 2011. She has worked as a US Postal Carrier, a cashier, a bookkeeper, a legal assistant, and a Nabisco factory worker. She lives in Portland, Oregon.
A darkly comic novel about two young brothers trying to make sense of an increasingly bleak world in small town Pennsylvania during World War II.

The World’s Smallest Bible chronicles the seriocomic boyhood of Ethan and Jeremiah Mueller in mill town Pennsylvania during the height of World War II. As they lose friends and neighbors to the front lines, the boys try to make sense of the mounting darkness with their imaginations—except in their world, no one ever dies. In a private, laconic language, they invent stories that mirror the irrational world around them: a chaplain with bad news becomes the Angel of Death, skeletal Nazis lurk around the corner, and the ghost of a dead playmate taps at their bedroom window in the night. With startling lyricism and narrative grace, Dennis Must has fashioned an indelible vision of the Mueller boys’ blighted youth.

ABOUT DENNIS MUST
Dennis Must is the author of two short story collections: Oh, Don’t Ask Why (Red Hen Press, 2007) and Banjo Grease (Creative Arts Book Company, 2000). His plays have been performed Off-Off-Broadway, and his fiction has appeared in numerous anthologies and literary journals. He has worked as a cabinetmaker, short-order cook, lighting rod installer, florist, bartender, bellhop, and as a general laborer in a glass factory, in a steel mill, on highway construction, and on the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad. For over a decade, he was Executive Vice President of Corporate Space, Inc., a commercial real estate firm in Boston that he co-founded. He lives in Salem, Massachusetts.
"Where, oh where would we be without the dynamic intelligence and feats of lyric daring that Douglas Kearney’s work has delivered to American poetry? The poems in Patter run back and forth through the realms of private interiority, popular culture, and the vast public arena of history, all the while re-inventing what the poetic line is capable of bearing and baring. Completely and unironically alive with genuine feeling, these are poems that are not afraid to say and show how we matter to one another."

—TRACY K. SMITH

For a couple struggling with infertility, conception is a war against their bodies. Blood and death attend. But when the war is won, and life stares, hungry, in the parents’ faces, where does that violence, anxiety, and shame go? The poems in Patter re-imagine miscarriages as minstrel shows, magic tricks, and comic strips; set Darth Vader against Oedipus’s dad in competition for “Father of the Year”; and interrogate the poet’s family’s stint on reality TV. In this, his third collection, award-winning poet Douglas Kearney doggedly worries the line between love and hate, showing how it bleeds itself into “fatherhood.”


ABOUT DOUGLAS KEARNEY
Poet/performer/librettist Douglas Kearney’s first full-length collection of poems, Fear, Some, was published in 2006 by Red Hen Press. His second, The Black Automaton (Fence Books, 2009), was Catherine Wagner’s selection for the National Poetry Series. It was also a finalist for the PEN Center USA Award in 2010. He has received a Whiting Writers’ Award, a Coat Hanger Award, and fellowships at Idyllwild and Cave Canem. Raised in Altadena, CA, he lives with his family in California’s Santa Clarita Valley. He teaches at CalArts.
"Plunging head first into the colorful waters of popular culture, William Trowbridge manages to find there are ways to reiterate some of the basic stuff of lyric poetry. His gathered poems combine pointed social criticism with just plain verbal fun."

—BILLY COLLINS

"To call William Trowbridge a plain-spoken poet is accurate and one of his great virtues: he is unafraid of being understood. He is also a master of metaphor and, one never doubts the honesty of his poems, his voice. His poems speak, oh they speak! What he does is very hard to do and he does it brilliantly."

—THOMAS LUX

The sixth collection of poetry by seriocomic master William Trowbridge, “one of America’s best and wittiest poets” (Charles Harper Webb). William Trowbridge’s Put This On, Please: New & Selected Poems contains work from all five of his full collections, as well as a group of new poems. In lines that capture the rhythms of everyday speech (with the ghost of meter haunting closely along), Trowbridge follows misfits and outcasts whose ramblings and shamblings reflect our own well-meaning gropes for fulfillment. These reader-friendly poems draw often from classic films and other elements of popular culture—from Buster Keaton to Chuck Berry, from King Kong to Wile E. Coyote. Trowbridge is not squeamish about exploring the darker side of humanity, as in poems about the Kiss of Death, delivered by Michael Corleone in The Godfather II, or Charles Starkweather, mass murderer and the last person to die in the Nebraska electric chair. Capping off the book, a group of new poems takes a fresh look at old themes, sounding deepened notes of both melancholy and celebration. Throughout this seriocomic account of human foibles, vices, and wonders, Trowbridge makes a strong case for laughter as the only appropriate response to our post-post-modern condition.

ABOUT WILLIAM TROWBRIDGE
William Trowbridge is the Poet Laureate of Missouri. He is the author of the poetry collections Ship of Fool, Enter Dark Stranger, O Paradise, Flickers, and The Complete Book of Kong, and the chapbooks The Packing House Cantata, The Four Seasons, and The Book of Kong. His poems have appeared in such periodicals as The Gettysburg Review, The Iowa Review, The Georgia Review, Poetry, Boulevard, and New Letters. He lives in the Kansas City area and teaches in the University of Nebraska’s low-residency MFA program.
"One of the royal couples of the L.A. poetry scene."

—LA WEEKLY

"In the unique geography of any marriage, there are many and varied landscapes, cityscapes, main arteries, side streets, and dark alleyways. Wanda Coleman & Austin Straus have mapped theirs with courage, passion, anger, joy, exasperation, and gratitude in language that speaks—and sings—to anyone open-hearted enough to hear."

—STEPHEN KESSLER, AUTHOR OF MOVING TARGETS: ON POETS, POETRY, & TRANSLATION

Wanda Coleman and Austin Straus’s tell-all paean to a marriage that crisscrosses the racial and cultural Maginot Lines of American society.

There’s plenty of love between Wanda Coleman and Austin Straus, but it has an edge: every kiss, every snuggle, every touch is political. How to make a marriage work under the unyielding pressures of racial bigotry and cultural bias? How to maintain their creativity and independence as poets and artists faced with the daily pressures of survival? For over three decades, Coleman and Straus have grappled with these questions—and with one another. Together, they have built a wall of desire, carnal and spiritual, to shield them from an often unwelcoming world. The Love Project sings their blood oath in an open and jazzy verse that holds nothing back, offering to the world some of the better that has flowered between them.

ABOUT WANDA COLEMAN & AUSTIN STRAUS

Wanda Coleman is the author of the poetry collections Bathwater Wine, winner of the Lenore Marshall Poetry Prize, and Mercurochrome, a finalist for the National Book Award, as well as many other books of poetry, fiction, and essays. She won an Emmy Award as a writer for Days of Our Lives. A Los Angeles native, she lives there with her husband, Austin Straus.

A poet and painter, Austin Straus is the author of the collections Drunk with Light and Intensifications, for which he also did the cover art. Born in Brooklyn, he has lived for many years in Los Angeles with his wife, Wanda Coleman.
“David Mason’s poems are about moments of realisation. Something is otherwise. Something has been learned with pain and still it won’t settle. There are families moving through houses and institutions, ageing, losing grip, and there are the young and rising and memories of youth. The language is humane, unfussy, firm, moving but not calculated to move. And beyond the personal there is the country as it spreads through its inhabitants and leaves its mark on nature. ‘Nobody gave me a god,’ ends one poem, ‘so I perfect my idolatry of doubt.’ It is the doubt that is moving, the way it rounds itself and speaks.”

—GEORGE SZIRTES

Sea Salt, award-winning poet David Mason’s first new collection of shorter poems in a decade, is a beautiful evocation of crisis and change.

Long regarded as one of the best narrative and dramatic poets at work in the United States, David Mason has also been regularly producing soulful lyrics. In the ten years since the publication of his last collection of shorter poems, Mason has refined his art in the fires of wrenching personal change. The result is an almost entirely new poetic voice and his most rigorous and memorable book to date. Emotionally resonant and elegant in phrasing, the poems of Sea Salt, which have appeared in publications such as Best American Poetry, The New Yorker, Harper’s, and Poetry, are a powerful evocation of crisis and change. These “poems of a decade” demonstrate that the author of Ludlow: A Verse Novel and The Scarlet Libretto is also a lyric poet at the top of his game.

ABOUT DAVID MASON

David Mason is the Poet Laureate of Colorado. His books of poems include The Buried Houses, The Country I Remember, and Arrivals. His verse novel, Ludlow, won the Colorado Book Award in 2007, and was named Best Book of Contemporary Poetry of the year by the Contemporary Poetry Review. It was also featured on the PBS NewsHour. Mason is the author of an essay collection, The Poetry of Life and the Life of Poetry, and a memoir, News from the Village, which appeared in 2010. A new collection of essays, Two Minds of a Western Poet, followed in 2011. Mason has also written the libretti for composer Lori Laitman’s opera of The Scarlet Letter, her operatic adaptation of Ludlow, and her oratorio, Vedem. A former Fulbright fellow to Greece, he lives in Colorado and Oregon and teaches at Colorado College.
WHAT DOES A HOUSE WANT?

Selected Poems

Gary Geddes

“It comes as a relief to read work by a poet who appears to be at least as interested in the world as he is in himself. Here, we are happy to be conducted by Gary Geddes out of the glass dome of the ego and into a wider, more capacious world of culture, history, and even erudition.”

—BILLY COLLINS

“The poems in Gary Geddes’s What Does a House Want? have weight not often found in contemporary poetry, partly because they range far and wide, are not about one person, family, continent, or even era. They are about the world, about us in that world. They are fanciful, playful, sad, intense, frightening, and authentic, often all those at once. Mostly, though, Geddes’s poems are true, each and every one.”

—MARY TROY, AUTHOR OF BEAUTIES

What Does a House Want? is a tongue in the ear and a red-hot needle to the conscience, full of poems in Gary Geddes’s “brilliantly polished, cinematographic, white-knuckled style” (Montreal Gazette).

What Does a House Want? affirms Gary Geddes’s place as one of the premier Canadian poets of his generation. Equally at home with the lyric and the long poem, Geddes brings his “deadly accuracy in language and form” and his no-holds-barred style to bear on multinationals, Israeli-Palestinian violence, the guilt of Leon Trotsky, P.O.W.s, assassins, mad-bombers, China’s bloody Emperor Qin Shu Huang, and the reputation of Ezra Pound. “Sandra Lee Scheuer,” a lyric on the Kent State killings, has been described as “the kind of poem most poets wait a lifetime for;” and The Terracotta Army, an award-winning sequence on politics and art, insists on the marriage of story and song, embracing narrative, yet achieving a rare and luminous lyric intensity.

ABOUT GARY GEDDES

Gary Geddes has written and edited more than forty books of poetry, fiction, non-fiction, drama, criticism, translation, and anthologies, and won a dozen national and international literary awards, including the Commonwealth Poetry Prize (Americas Region), the Lieutenant Governor’s Award for Literary Excellence, and the Gabriela Mistral Prize from Chile, which was awarded simultaneously to Octavio Paz, Vaclav Havel, Ernesto Cardenal, Rafael Alberti, and Mario Benedetti. When not serving as Distinguished Professor at Western Washington University or Visiting Writer at the University of Missouri–St Louis, he resides on Thetis Island, British Columbia.

March 2014 • 240 pages, 5.5 x 9, tradepaper • 978-1-59709-276-0, $19.95 • Rights: World: Red Hen Press
The poems in Lisa C. Krueger’s *Talisman* interrogate the everyday expression of complex human emotions. In psychological portraits stunning in their precision, Krueger brings her observational powers to bear on the domestic and its darknesses—childbirth, play, sex, and family picnics, as well as abuse, disability, adultery, and mental illness. We see how intimacy is laced with uncertainty, how the bonds between us can be a form of bondage. Life’s long arc is considered, from the early developmental stages of attachment and individuation to the existential dramas of purpose and meaning in middle and old age. What emerges is a study in the mystery of survival, in how we move beyond the broken places in ourselves. These poems magnify small, everyday redemptions as signs—talismansof human potential, and ask us to think about our choices, to use language as a force to press against truth.

**ABOUT LISA C. KRUEGER**

Lisa C. Krueger is a poet and psychologist. She is the author of two books of poetry, *Rebloom* and *animals the size of dreams*. Her poems have appeared in numerous journals, including *Atlanta Review* and *Prairie Schooner*. She has written a series of interactive journals related to psychology and creativity. She maintains a private therapy practice focused on women’s issues, health psychology, writing therapy, and the role of creativity in wellness. She lives in Pasadena, California.
CRUISING AT SIXTY TO SEVENTY
Poems & Essay
Jim Tilley

PRAISE FOR JIM TILLEY

“Jim Tilley does confide in his readers here as he explores a refreshing variety of subjects—everything from the complexity of father-son and husband-wife relations to the more solvable problems of dark matter and the origins of the cosmos. But what wins our confidence is not his range but his steady hand on the poem and his steady gaze at the world.”

—BILLY COLLINS

“Jim Tilley is a bracing and quietly confident writer, able to consistently surprise us, whether in missives from domestic life, topical poems, or poems which quirkily address what he calls ‘the big questions.’ These are wry, bittersweet, and unobtrusively instructive poems in the tradition of Wilbur, Schuyler, and Dunn, and they are very much worth reading.”

—DAVID WOJAHN

The second collection from award-winning poet Jim Tilley, who writes “finely crafted poems in which readers will find bits and pieces of their own lives” (Stephen Dobyns).

Cruising at Sixty to Seventy is the second book from award-winning poet Jim Tilley. In three sections—Dear Wife, Dear Self, Dear Friends—the speaker, a physicist and mathematician by education, now retired from a career on Wall Street, reflects on everyday experience, finding grace and drama in life’s smaller moments. As in Tilley’s debut collection, In Confidence, many poems use ideas, problems, and puzzles from physics and mathematics to explore personal relationships, such as “Particle and Wave,” in which a fundamental concept from quantum mechanics becomes a metaphor for the ripples and collisions on the fabric of family life. The book ends with a personal essay, “The Elegant Solution” (originally published as a Ploughshares Solo), about Tilley’s relationship with his father based on the language of mathematics.

ABOUT JIM TILLEY
Jim Tilley earned a doctorate in physics from Harvard and worked on Wall Street for twenty years. His first collection of poetry, In Confidence, was published by Red Hen Press in 2011. His recent poems have been published in literary journals, such as Virginia Quarterly Review, The Southern Review, Southwest Review, and Alaska Quarterly Review. He has won the Sycamore Review’s Wabash Prize for Poetry, the New England Poetry Club’s Firman Houghton Award, and an International Publication Award from Atlanta Review. He lives in Bedford Corners, New York.
An “etymology of goodbye,” Andrea Scarpino’s full-length debut rejuvenates the elegy and bears witness to a world in continual collapse.

In her debut full-length poetry collection, Andrea Scarpino’s elegies move between personal and political loss, between science, myth, and spirituality, and between lyric intensity and narrative clarity. At their heart is a longing for those we have lost, and an acknowledgement that loss irrevocably changes us and what we understand of the world. Blending mythological figures such as Persephone and Achilles, scientific approaches to knowledge learned from her microbiologist father, and a deep ambivalence regarding religious ideas of death and afterlife, Scarpino’s poems invite us to examine the world, our own place in it, and what to make of its continual collapse.
“Endlessly inventive and packed with small surprises, these poems turn the ordinary inside-out. Their quiet elegance belies their urgency, always underlying, and makes the language all the more powerful for its restraint. There’s no extraneous decoration here, no prettifying or showing-off. The poet takes the world head on, moment by moment, with an intelligence and compassion that are fierce. This is a poet who deserves far greater recognition than she has received. She’s among the very best of her generation, and Our Vanishing is one of the most honest, moving books I’ve read in years.”

—CHASE TWICHELL

Winner of the 2012 Benjamin Saltman Poetry Award, Our Vanishing is a precise and fiercely compassionate volume of weathered tenderness.

Frannie Lindsay’s fourth collection of poetry, Our Vanishing, investigates the ways in which we stay present, and humanely so, in an age where much—our environment, our faith, our sense of ourselves—is being stripped away, reduced, and devalued. The speakers explore worlds of profound loss and alienation as turning points back to a shared and enriched humanity. In telling their truth with compassionate objectivity, they give heart, reuniting readers with the humble and ordinary goodness that sustains us all.

ABOUT FRANNIE LINDSAY
Frannie Lindsay is the winner of Red Hen Press’s 2012 Benjamin Saltman Poetry Award. Her previous books are Mayweed (The Word Works, 2010); Lamb (Perugia, 2006); and Where She Always Was (Utah State University Press, 2005). Her awards include the May Swenson Award, the Perugia Award, the Washington Prize, and the Missouri Review Prize. Her work has been featured in Ted Kooser’s column “American Life in Poetry,” and on Writer’s Almanac and Poetry Daily. She has held fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Massachusetts Cultural Council, and has received several Pushcart nominations. She lives in Belmont, Massachusetts.
“Melina Draper’s wonderful poems recall the author’s magical childhood and adolescence in South America. Blending the personal with history, they are populated with fascinating characters, including the eccentric and engaging street people of Buenos Aires and Montevideo, a mysterious photographer-lover, and the youthful Charles Darwin on the loose in a scientifically uncharted continent. Darwin, who turns up a number of times, gives a foundation in the deeper past to this work of memory and nostalgia. With its arresting lyricism and formal craft, Later the House Stood Empty brings a stirring new voice to contemporary American poetry.”

—JOHN MORGAN

The poems of Later the House Stood Empty steam up from the banks of the Río de la Plata, exploring its history—personal, political, and geological—from the tip of a dinosaur tail found on the beach and the expeditions of Darwin to the lingering devastations of the 1970s military coups. Their speaker straddles two worlds: between Argentina and Uruguay, between Buenos Aires and the small town of Colonia, at once of this place and passing through, both foreigner and daughter of the river. In short lyrics pared down to what is left when love and hope have gone, Draper documents overlapping layers of time, stitched together by desire, beauty, longing, tragedy, and loss.

Later the House Stood Empty mines personal and historical recollections of life on the banks of the Río de la Plata, charting a path lit by small fires of memory, weaving through time and history, to form a portrait of place and longing.

ABOUT MELINA DRAPER
Melina Draper’s poems have appeared in ZYZZYVA, Cimarron Review, Borderlands: Texas Review, PALABRA: A Magazine of Chicano & Latino Literary Art, Salamander, and other journals. Her book Place of Origin/Lugar de Origen (Oyster River Press, 2008), co-authored with her mother, Argentine writer Elena Lafert, won the Latino Book Award for Best Bilingual Book of Poetry in 2009. She holds an MFA in poetry from the University of Alaska Fairbanks and an MA in fiction from the University of New Hampshire. She lives in Geneva, New York.
"In the high latitudes where Susanna Mishler has trained her eye and temperament, sunlight is precious and absolute. Its winter absence, its summer return, the very increments of solstice and equinox are far more sharply drawn than in our milder, vaguer climates. We feel its northern brilliance in her every line. In one of the poems in this magical volume, ‘A welder’s / hammer strikes on slag and uncovers / a bright new seam,’ which might serve very well as a figure for Mishler’s own poetic achievement. She works with a bold instrument; she pays meticulous attention to the elements of a ravishing, damaged, stern-but-fragile world; she uncovers real beauty in the linkages. And makes real beauty too.”

—LINDA GREGERSON

Susanna J. Mishler “pays meticulous attention to the elements of a ravishing, damaged, stern-but-fragile world; she uncovers real beauty in the linkages. And makes real beauty too” (Linda Gregerson).

Termination Dust, the first high-altitude snowfall, marks the end of summer in Alaska. Rooted in the seasons and sense of place, the poems in this collection employ image-driven lyric and dreamlike narrative to grapple with questions of death and belonging. A strange romance between inner and outer landscapes emerges from what increasingly seem like the prayers of an atheist. A tree becomes “a vascular connection / between kingdoms,” and the human eye “a hole / hungry for small beauties.” Full of vivid animal, human, and ghostly encounters, the poems in Termination Dust are a kind of spiritual notebook for the unbeliever, forging their way to an earthbound grace.

About Susanna J. Mishler

Susanna J. Mishler’s poems have appeared in numerous journals, such as The Iowa Review, Mid-American Review, and Kenyon Review Online. She holds an MFA in Poetry from The University of Arizona in Tucson, where she served as a poetry editor for Sonora Review. She’s the recipient of a Peter Taylor Fellowship in Poetry at the Kenyon Review Writers’ Workshop. Susanna is a founder and curator of the Synergies Live Reading and Performance Series in her hometown of Anchorage, Alaska. In addition to her literary pursuits, Susanna works as an electrician.
**DREAM THE NIGHT MY BROTHER DIES**

_by Kim Addonizio_

Whichever way I turn there is a door.
I run in and out of the doors.
In one room, inconsolable weeping.
In another, a sad animal regards me.
In a third, a hole in the floor.
I lower my bucket
a long way down on its white rope.

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Issue 14 of _The Los Angeles Review_ is dedicated to Madeline DeFrees. Featuring a roundup of new border literature, the winners of the A Room of Her Own Foundation Orlando Awards, the Red Hen Press Poetry and Short Story Awards, a suite of new book reviews, and original work from Kim Addonizio, Kim Barnes, Elana Bell, Gerri Brightwell, Okla Elliott, Jessica Treadway, and many others.

_The Los Angeles Review_, established in 2003, is the voice of Los Angeles, and the voice of the nation. With its multitude of cultures, Los Angeles roils at the center of the cauldron of divergent literature emerging from the West Coast. Perhaps from this place something can emerge that speaks to the writer or singer or dancer or wild person in all of us, something disturbing, something alive, something of the possibility of what it could be to be human in the 21st century.
When Rain Hurts
An Adoptive Mother’s Journey with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome
MARY EVELYN GREENE

“With vivid language and strong imagery, she describes the harsh deprivations characteristic of Russia’s orphanages, the incompetence of its international adoption agency, and her frustrated need to be a mother... [Readers] will find in [Greene’s] story fertile suggestions for a public support system capable of addressing the complex problems of formerly institutionalized children.”

—PUBLISHERS WEEKLY

Mary Evelyn Greene practices law at the Environmental Integrity Project in Washington, D.C. She lives in Maryland with her husband, two children, and multiple furry friends.

When Rain Hurts is the story of one mother’s quest to find a magical path of healing and forgiveness for her son, a boy so damaged by the double whammy of prenatal alcohol abuse and the stark rigors of Russian orphanage life that he was feral by the time of his adoption at age three. Bizarre behaviors, irrational thoughts, and dangerous preoccupations were the norm—no amount of love, it turns out, can untangle the effects of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. More people are coping with and caring for those affected by Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders than individuals living with autism, but because there is a stigma associated with this preventable, devastating birth defect, it is a pandemic of disability and tragedy that remains underreported and underexplored. When Rain Hurts puts an unapologetic face to living and coping with this tragedy while doggedly searching for a more hopeful outcome for one beautiful, innocent, but damaged little boy.
The Forage House
Poetry
TESS TAYLOR

Tess Taylor teaches writing at UC Berkeley and reviews poetry for NPR’s All Things Considered. Her chapbook, The Misremembered World, was published by the Poetry Society of America. The Forage House is her first book. She lives in El Cerrito, California.

“Every so often there is a book of poetry that reminds us how well verse can speak history. The Forage House by Tess Taylor is one of those time capsules. . . . On their own, the poems are visceral, densely detailed, and frequently playful . . . Read together, in order, the details are illuminated by context and gain historical sweep.”

—CAMILLE GUILLOT, OXFORD AMERICAN

“The most fascinating biographical fact about Taylor is not that she can trace her ancestry all the way back, directly, to Thomas Jefferson; it is her eloquent, thoughtful response to this grand lineage, as she investigates questions about perception, memory, loss and fractured families.”

—CARMELA CIURARU, SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

“Tess Taylor’s The Forage House is a brave and compelling collection that bears witness to the journey of historical discovery. Sifting through archives, artifact, and souvenir, Taylor presents a dialectic of what’s recorded and what’s not, unearthing the traces that give way to her own history—and a vital link to our shared American past. What’s here and accounted for draws us powerfully toward what’s absent; what seems complete here never is—something as fragmented as history in the language, as haunted too.”

—NATASHA TRETHEWEY

Tess Taylor’s much-anticipated lyric debut is at once a sensuous reckoning with an ambiguous family history and a haunting meditation on national legacy. The Forage House explores how we make stories, and how stories—even painful ones—make us.

August 2013 • 88 pages, 6 x 9, tradepaper • 978-1-59709-270-8, $17.95 • Rights: World: Red Hen Press

The Ogre’s Wife
Poetry
RON KOERTGE

Ron Koertge is the author of a dozen poetry collections and numerous books of fiction for teenagers. He lives in South Pasadena, California.

“A pleasure for any reader; in this collection, ‘the straw of the day, bushel after bushel of it, slowly / turns to gold.’”

—BARBARA HOFFERT, LIBRARY JOURNAL

“Koertge’s range of approaches . . . deserve mention for their ability to engage and delight. In its finer moments, The Ogre’s Wife turns the archetypal into subtle points of entry for reflecting on passion. . . . Here, the storybook comes disconcertingly and achingly close to life.”

—FOREWORD REVIEWS

“Wit, the impeccably dressed and better educated sibling of funny, suffers an unstable reputation: clever yet aloof, socially polished but oddly cold. In the warmer, less formal surroundings of Ron Koertge’s poems, however, wit lets down its guard and, behold: charm, intelligence, amazing inventiveness, and a kind of sweetness in its patient regard for a world so frequently bereft of those qualities. So what could be more welcome than a new Koertge collection, where wit presides, and wisdom elegantly clothed in laughter is always in attendance.”

—B.H. FAIRCHILD

The eclectic, witty, and often moving new collection of poems by acclaimed pop iconographer, Ron Koertge.

Also by Ron Koertge:
Indigo, 978-1-59709-467-2, $17.95 (catalog page 21)
Slice of Moon

Poetry

KIM DOWER

“The poems are bold and sexy and smart.”

—STEPHEN DUNN, PULITZER PRIZE-WINNING POET

“Slice of Moon is a dark chocolate fever dream of love, of mothers. Kim Dower dares you into the dark. You may find yourself lurking there.”

—ERICA JONG

“Kim Dower’s remarkable first book, Air Kissing on Mars, was on fire. Slice of Moon burns even hotter, its flames rising even higher.”

—THOMAS LUX

Slice of Moon, the second collection by Kim Dower, retains the whimsical, accessible style of her debut, Air Kissing on Mars, while reaching deeper, with greater lyrical intensity, irony, and poignancy.

Also by Kim Dower:

Air Kissing on Mars, 978-1-59709-166-4, $18.95 (catalog page 20)
Chopper! Chopper!
Poetry from Bordered Lives
VERÓNICA REYES

“...Ms. Davis subjects the stuff of culture, history, and religion to the recombinant power of the imagination and seems to argue that these disciplines make use of the same tools... Becoming Judas is a challenging book, but it rewards our efforts as readers with a brief look into a tremendously inventive and energetic mind.”

—NEW YORK JOURNAL OF BOOKS

The second collection by Nicelle Davis, Becoming Judas, is an “elemental bible-diary-manifesto,” a hypertext that weaves together Mormonism, Mamaism, Manson, Lennon, the Kabbalah, and the lost Gospel of Judas into an ecstatic, searing meditation on raw religion.

—KATHARINE COLES
“Many of these poems are brave and sensuous . . . it’s refreshing to see Piazza capturing not so much her shifting emotions as her understanding of them. . . . Promising work from a writer worth watching.”

—LIBRARY JOURNAL

“Jessica Piazza’s brilliantly conceived debut collection, Interrobang, is a stunning sequence of (primarily) sonnets that unfolds with both a mature formal acuity and a profound philosophical sophistication. It is an absolute tour de force. These poems emerge as reflections of a kaleidoscopic self as they interrogate those fears and desires that drive and haunt us. Whatever the answers might be to these exclamatory questions, the speaker of these beautiful and troubling poems knows she has only one response available to her—to continue regardless, and to persevere.”

—DAVID ST. JOHN

Winner of the 2011 A Room of Her Own Foundation’s

To the Lighthouse Poetry Publication Prize

Existing at the intersection of darkness and play, the noisy, irreverent, and self-conscious poems in Interrobang take clinical “phobias” and clinical “philias” as their conceit. Each poem makes its own music, the crescendos and decrescendos born of obsessions over anxiety and lust. Encompassing a range of forms (but mostly sonnets), each piece toes the line between traditional meter and contemporary sonic play, while a tell-tale heart beats beneath the floor of the collection, constantly reminding us of our shames, fears, and the clock’s unrelenting ticking. Through individual stories about love, degradation of the self, the redemptive power of genuine humility, and the refuge offered by art and language, Interrobang illustrates how even the worst-case scenario of these pathologies are, fundamentally, just extensions of the dark truths to which every one of us can relate.

Boomerangs in the Living Room

Poetry

REX WILDER

“In a vibrant literary age, poetic innovation often expresses itself by creating new forms. Rex Wilder has added a promising new form to the store of English-language poetry—the boomerang. Compressed but surprisingly flexible, the boomerang can handle themes both light and heavy. Who knows? Wilder’s new form may become an American alternative to the haiku.”

—DANA GIOIA

“With the ‘Boomerang,’ Rex Wilder, gifted by the great poet Richard Wilbur, adds to the storehouse of truly American forms. It sits regally alongside /The Bop/ and /The Blues/. You’ll find the thrown arc of these poems equally infectious and addictive. The poems in this book are kinetically alive, whimsical, and compelling.”

—MAJOR JACKSON

Rex Wilder’s second collection introduces the world to a new form: the boomerang, a four-line nouveau haiku, an anti-Tweet that aims for permanence in an evanescent world. These “admirable throwaways” (so nicknamed by Richard Wilbur, who advised the author on their shape) must rhyme the first word or syllable with the last. The opening salvo must suggest a coda, the bullet must return to its chamber. In the process, the poem moves like a boomerang: according to Wilbur, “a thrown boomerang has three phases: it flies to first base (as it were), then travels over to third and rises, then swoops home.” Boomerangs in the Living Room catches in its sweep literature’s classic themes: love, death, family, sex. The poems that come swooping back are seductive, destructive, endlessly quotable, and heartbreakingly beautiful.
Golden Ghetto
How the Americans & French Fell In & Out of Love During the Cold War
STEVE BASSETT

“Bassett's old-school journalistic approach and fondness for polysyllabics is fused with an enthusiastic storytelling style. His chapter titles and subtitles—like 'Escaping, Eggs, and Betrayal,' 'Communists Eating Popcorn,' and 'Séances and Pink Ladies'—especially capture the vivacity of his voice.”

—WEEKLY ALIBI

“As the only American who has tackled the task, Steve Bassett, in his book Golden Ghetto, has provided a one-of-a-kind insight into the sixteen-year life of an extraordinary air station closed by Charles de Gaulle's imperial edict. I found it fascinating reading and an accurate portrayal of a military life that will probably never be seen again.”

—AIR FORCE MAJOR GENERAL JOHN RIDDLE (RET.)

Golden Ghetto: How the Americans & French Fell In & Out of Love During the Cold War is an intimate, improbable story of fear and skepticism giving way to trust and friendship at a huge U.S. Air Force base in central France that, for two generations, transformed the political, economic, and social life of an occupied territory.

A Bug Collection
Short Stories
MELODY MANSFIELD

“In the bizarre enchantment of this collection, all the glories and dilemmas of Western civilization are second nature to the dung beetles, katydids, and fireflies, while Melody Mansfield's reverence for all life makes her intimately acquainted with every pedipalp and scutellum. Immerse yourself in these strange pages: erudite, ecstatic, and suffused with gentle humor.”

—DIANE LEREF, AUTHOR OF CALIFORNIA TRANSIT: STORIES AND NOBODY WAKES UP PRETTY

A Bug Collection is not for the squeamish. These stories about love, death, and the webby, tenuous intersections between the two take a humorous and heartbreaking look at the complexities of human life through the compound eyes of bugs. When a lone mayfly has a painful revelation about the ephemerality of her own existence, it sets in motion a chain of revelations by more bugs: a honey bee who struggles against a paralyzing depression; a katydid who comes to terms with a life-altering disability; a water strider who offers proof of reincarnation; a tribe of ants who must confront their individual and collective powerlessness in the face of a catastrophic event; a tumbling flower beetle who falls for an abusive mate; an earthworm who gains a Buddhist-like understanding of his place in the universe; and a host of other bugs who force us to consider what it means to be fully alive in a world of dung.
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