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Unseen City

NOVEL

AMY SHEARN

This novel details a multi-generational portrait of New York and the unexpected connections between a lonely Brooklyn librarian, a widower returning to his roots, and a ghost still lingering in a home that was once part of an activist-founded farming settlement.

In a city teeming with stories, how do lost souls find one another? It’s a question Meg Rhys doesn’t think she’s asking. Meg is a self-identified spinster librarian, satisfied to live with her cat, stacks of books, and her dead sister’s ghost in her New York City apartment. Then she becomes obsessed with an intriguing library patron and the haunted house he’s trying to research. The house has its own story to tell, too, of love, and war, of racism’s fallout and the ghost story that is gentrification, and of Brooklyn before it was Brooklyn. What follows is an exploration of what home is, how we live with loss, who belongs in the city and to whom the city belongs, and the possibilities and power of love.

“Gripping, moving, and vital, Unseen City asks how human life might defy its lifespan—in the throes of love, the conviction of belief, and each person’s mark upon a city that will survive them. For two days, I laughed at Amy Shearn’s wry humor and gasped at her gorgeous sentences; I couldn’t put this brilliant book down until its perfect final line (and I’m haunted still—which is appropriate, I suppose)!”
—Miranda Beverly-Whittemore, bestselling author of June and Bittersweet

“In true Shearn style, Unseen City is whip-smart, hilarious, and also deeply touching, and this story about mismatched New Yorkers finding common ground in a city they’ve decided—come hell or higher rent—to adore, will delight and charm you long after the last page.”
—Courtney Maum, author of I Am Having So Much Fun Here Without You, Touch, and founder of THE CABINS

Amy Shearn is the author of the critically acclaimed novels How Far Is the Ocean from Here, chosen as a notable debut by Poets & Writers and a hot summer read by the Chicago Tribune, and The Mermaid of Brooklyn, which was a selection of Target’s Emerging Authors program, a Hudson News Summer Reads pick, and was also published in the UK and as an audiobook. She is a fiction editor for Joyland Magazine, and her writing has appeared in the New York Times, Slate, Real Simple, and many literary publications. She earned an MFA from the University of Minnesota, has received a Promise Award grant from the Sustainable Arts Foundation, and has participated in residencies at SPACE on Ryder Farm and elsewhere. Amy lives in New York City with her two children.
Outside the other girls are giggling, twirling their hoops and sticks, their boots clacking against the flagstones. Their long, stiff skirts swish as they move. Usually the yard is noisy with the clomping of horses and carriages brawling Fifth Avenue, a rocky, rutted path that leads toward the new park up north; usually they hear medicine men and fruit sellers peddling their wares and herds of pigs sniffing along, the usual Manhattan cacophony. It’s a dusty part of town, far north of where most of the grown-up business is conducted, down in the sewage-and-cat-carcass-strewn streets of Tammany Hall’s domain. She can remember when she first came to the orphanage (in a spotty way—she remembers the orphanage seeming new and strange but can’t recall what life had been like before, or where, or with whom) that the land was even wilder back then, the stately plantation house seeming to rise from the dirt as if Miss Murray and the Miss Shotwells had grown it from a seed. Since those days, the sound of new construction has rarely ceased.

Today the street is eerily still, though no one seems to notice but her. She and Jane usually like leaning against the fence and peeking through the holes to catch a glimpse of the occasional pairs of fancy ladies promenading in hoop skirts and lacy parasols, making up stories about what they will do when they are fancy ladies themselves. But today something is different, as if her interior mope has transformed into weather. The sky presses down, gray as the woolen blankets on their cots. She notices, after a moment, that the air smells different than usual. She turns to an older girl. Tillie, does it smell like burning to you? Tillie shrugs, Another slum fire down in Five Points, I wager. She nods, though she is not satisfied with the answer.
The Likely World
NOVEL

MELANIE CONROY-GOLDMAN

Single mom Mellie has just emerged from a shattering addiction to the memory drug cloud when a stranger who may be her baby’s father appears with a dangerous agenda.

Twenty years of addiction to cloud, a drug which wipes the user’s short-term memory, have left single mom Mellie’s mind in fragments. With the help of a tough-minded sponsor, and motivated by her own medically challenged daughter, Mellie clings to a fragile sobriety. Then, on the evening of her twenty-ninth day sober, a stranger pulls into her driveway and her heart surges. When Mellie’s pursuit of this man and the past they may share threatens her sponsor, however, Mellie will have to put her tiny family and her recovery at risk in hopes of saving the woman who saved her first.

“Conroy-Goldman’s gritty, street postmodernism will rewire your brain in ways that recall David Foster Wallace or Philip K. Dick. But it’s the depth of feeling here, about love, about motherhood, reminiscent of Rachel Kushner or Claire Vaye Watkins, that will break your heart.”
—Peter Ho Davies

“The Likely World is bizarre and beautiful, equal parts brainy lit and gut-bucket pulp. Its heroine is unlike any female character I’ve ever encountered and I love her.”
—Mary Gaitskill

Melanie M. L. Conroy-Goldman is an Associate Professor of Creative Writing at Hobart and William Smith Colleges where she was a founding director of the Trias Residency for Writers, which has hosted such notables as Mary Gaitskill, Lidia Yuknavitch, and Jeff VanderMeer. Her fiction has been published in journals such as Southern Review and StoryQuarterly, in anthologies from Morrow and St. Martin’s, and online at venues such as McSweeney’s. She also volunteers at a maximum security men’s prison with the Cornell Prison Education Program. Her work is represented by Bill Clegg at the Clegg Agency. She lives in Ithaca, New York with her husband, daughter, and step-daughters.
Look. I spent ten years, twenty, vowing to get sober. I’d wake up, today’s the day. Sometimes I’d make it to noon. Sometimes I’d make it to breakfast. Each evening turned into a story about staying high enough not to hate myself for my own weakness. And then in the hospital, they showed me Juni’s little beating heart on the monitor and I turned over a new leaf. Except no, I didn’t. Even a baby in my belly, even a baby three months old and crying did not get me clean. And then, two years later, in the senseless logic of addiction and recovery, my toddler got me sober where my baby did not. Twenty-nine days. It may not sound like much but it’s the biggest, baddest thing I’ve ever done, and every second of it hurts like hell.

Did I eat cloud when she was inside me? Yes. Was she born damaged because of it? Yes. Yes. She has a regular brain and all the usual limbs but there are characteristic oddities in the size and shape of her fingernails, in the splay of her toes. There is a typical tendency towards respiratory infection that may turn to nothing or may kill her. Developmentally, there’s real variation from child to child. Cloud use, in utero, is understudied. For now, I can say that she’s fine.
High Skies
NOVELLA

TRACY DAUGHTERY

This novella recounts the collision of devastating weather, Cold War suspicion, tense race relations, and the unintended consequences of good intentions in a small West Texas town.

High Skies recounts the collision of devastating weather, Cold War suspicion, tense race relations, and the unintended consequences of good intentions in a small West Texas town in the 1950s, changing the futures of the families there and altering their perceptions of America. At the center of this perfect storm is Raymond “Flyboy” Seaker, a respected military veteran, now the vice principal of a school in which Troy, who tells the story, and his disabled friend Stevie will have their lives upended forever. Through a combination of his own well-meaning ambitions and the political maneuverings of others, Flyboy and the families he serves come to grasp the meaning of community and of individual fortitude. Written with a vivid economy recalling Denis Johnson’s Train Dreams and painting as indelible a portrait of small town life as Larry McMurtry’s The Last Picture Show, High Skies is a perfectly distilled American epic.

“Tracy Daughtery’s characters have a stubborn, wonderful realness to them, the sign of a writer absolutely alert to the complex world around us.”
—Andrea Barrett

“Daughtery’s writing is deeply rooted in time and place and the historical events that color the characters’ lives. The effect of this is not nostalgia but a perspective on the relationship between the private and the public, the personal and the political. His characters are wholly realized, the writing as clean as sheets on a summer line.”
—Robert Boswell

Tracy Daughterty is the author of several books of fiction and nonfiction, including the New York Times bestseller The Last Love Song: A Biography of Joan Didion. His short stories and essays have appeared in the New Yorker, Vanity Fair, British Vogue, the Paris Review online, McSweeney’s, and many other journals. The recipient of fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts, he lives in Corvallis, Oregon with his wife, writer Marjorie Sandor.
The first dust storm that spring coincided with the onset of my mother’s migraines. Early in the morning, that Friday, she grimaced while she stood at the stove scrambling eggs for our breakfast, and a little later while she packed peanut butter sandwiches and apple slices into clunky lunch pails for my sister and me to take to school. By eight thirty, when my father was pulling on his suit jacket and preparing to leave for his job at the independent oil and gas outfit he worked for, she was complaining of a shimmering blue aura flitting at the edges of her eyesight, making her nauseous. The sun was too bright through the kitchen window, she said. It blinded her, though the rays were finely filtered through the leaves of the spunky little pecan tree our father had planted in the backyard just last year. She could barely stand. She propped herself upright by hanging on to the greasy corner of the stove. My father dropped his jacket onto a kitchen chair and moved to help her into the bedroom. Neither of my parents were big nor tall, but my mother had never looked so bird-like, trembling, curled within the circle of my father’s slender arms. She hadn’t done her face and hair yet that morning; her cheeks were the color of the milk I’d spilled on the table earlier while fixing my cereal, and her uncombed hair resembled the checkered maze of the crossword puzzle in the newspaper, lines and angles branching in all directions.
Animal Wife
SHORT STORIES
LARA EHRLICH

These short stories are unified by girls and women who cross this threshold seeking liberation from family responsibilities, from societal expectations, from their own minds.

“In villages where women bore most of the weight of a constricted life, witches flew by night on broomsticks,” said Italo Calvino of the way imagination bridges the gap between everyday existence and an idealized alternative. The fifteen stories of Animal Wife are unified by girls and women who cross this threshold seeking liberation from family responsibilities, from societal expectations, from their own minds. A girl born with feathers undertakes a quest for the mother who abandoned her. An indecisive woman drinks Foresight, only to become stymied by the futures branching before her. A proofreader cultivates a cage-fighting alter ego. A woman becomes psychologically trapped in her car. A girl acts on her desire for a childhood friend as a monster draws closer to the shore. A widow invites a bear to hibernate in her den.”

“From the first sentence Animal Wife grabbed me and never let go. Sensual and intelligent, with gorgeous prose, it made me dizzy with its exploration and illumination of the inner and outer lives of girls and women.”
—Ann Hood, New York Times bestselling author

“The stories in Lara Ehrlich’s Animal Wife are gorgeous and heartbreaking. They glide into each other, refract, and expand outward again, echoing seasons and change and longing. They cause astonishment and wonder. They ask: what does it mean to be in a body? What do we ever know about girlhood? It is a complex and rewarding read.”
—Kristen Arnett, Author of Felt in the Jaw (Split Lip Press, 2017) and Mostly Dead Things (Tin House Books, 2019)

Lara Ehrlich is the author of the short story collection Animal Wife, which was selected as the winner of the Red Hen Fiction Award by New York Times bestselling author Ann Hood. Lara’s writing appears in StoryQuarterly, Hunger Mountain, the Massachusetts Review, and the Columbia Review, among others, and has been nominated for a 2020 Pushcart Prize. Lara has attended the Bread Loaf and Tin House writers’ conferences, and she received a 2019 Parent-Writer Fellowship from the Martha’s Vineyard Institute of Creative Writing. She is a graduate of the University of Chicago and Boston University, and she lives in Boston, Massachusetts, with her husband and daughter. Visit her website at laraehrlich.com.
The bear rifles through my garbage. He steals my newspaper and dozes in my magnolia tree. He helps himself to the cat’s food, dipping his paws into the dish, his ears twitching. Last night, he stood off with a raccoon. When it dug its fingers into the food, the bear popped its head off. It was only that once, though. He was staking his claim.

I keep still on my inflatable raft as he performs laps in the aboveground pool. He sprawls in my lounge chair with his belly to the sun. We sunbathe in companionable silence.

When the pool is covered, he comes to my door. I keep the screen locked now that Frank is gone. The bear looks at me with heavy-lidded eyes shadowed with soft, damp fur. I unlock the screen and let him in.

He follows my tour with polite interest and particularly likes the den, where Frank used to watch football and read the paper. He climbs into Frank’s easy chair, and when I show him how it reclines, he snuffles with pleasure.

It’s good to hear the game downstairs again while I make supper. I prepare salmon fillets with lemon and dill and serve them on TV trays so we can eat together in the den. He sniffs the fish, his claws clinking against the plate, and polishes it off in two bites.

As I clear his tray, he roars. I drop to the carpet and play dead. When nothing happens, I look up to find him watching me with a quizzical expression. His team lost, is all.

I sleep well now. If a thief or a rapist broke in, the bear would pop his head off. We try all kinds of fish. He likes the bottom-feeders best. They taste a bit like dirt, but I defer to his preference. Frank didn’t like fish. He had a meat and potato palate. The bear will eat anything I make with relish. I learn to bake, poach, fry, batter, sear, and soufflé. The bear’s coat is getting thick and glossy. We eat by candlelight.
Pretzel, Houdini & Olive
MEMOIR
DEBORAH THOMPSON

A self-identified “crazy dog-lady” makes family with dogs after the death of her life partner.

Told from the perspective of a self-identified “crazy dog lady,” these eleven interconnected essays follow one woman’s relations with five different dogs. Together, they travel over terrain spanning her husband’s battle with cancer, his death, her grieving process, and her rejoining the living as her dogs lead her forward from the other end of their leashes. Alongside her personal story, she considers such cultural issues as Americans’ unhealthy relationships with the natural world, ageism across species, Third World poverty and First World privilege, hoarding, and the meaning of happiness. This is not a sentimental “who-rescued-whom?” book about the healing power of animals. Instead, it explores one representative human’s relationships with dogs, with all their joys but also their frustrations, neuroses, and downright craziness.

“In an intoxicating mix of myth and story, natural history, science, and memoir, Thompson cooks up a masterful exploration of the human bond with dogs. Rolling in the wake of unspeakable grief after the loss of her partner to cancer, she turns to one of the other constants her life—the love of a good dog or a dumb dog or, really, almost any dog because the operative word there is ‘love,’ that unconditional wet-nosed bodily kind of love that sustains us and gets Thompson out of bed every morning, the love that keeps her mind moving and keeps her alive as she writes her way out of the deep holes left by loss. Required reading for anyone who has lost someone and loved a dog—which is nearly everyone.”
—Steven Church, author of I’m Just Getting to the Disturbing Part: On Work, Fear, and Fatherhood

Deborah Thompson is a professor of English at Colorado State University, where she teaches literary criticism and creative nonfiction. A Pushcart Prize winner, she has published personal essays in journals including the Missouri Review, Creative Nonfiction, Fourth Genre, Passages North, Briar Cliff, Upstreet, the Kenyon Review (online), McSweeney’s Internet Tendency, and others. Contest wins include the Missouri Review’s 2008 Jeffrey E. Smith Editors’ Prize in creative nonfiction and the 2010 Iowa Review contest in the nonfiction category. She lives with her dogs in Fort Collins, Colorado.
Not petting dogs has always been agony for me, and I have indulged in every kind of human-canine flirtation to get a dog to accept my touch. However, after Rajiv died, the need to touch fur, if not human skin, became almost mammalian, instinctual as a drive. Touch maintains your boundaries; it reminds you that you have an outline, a definition. The raw need for a defining touch, now denied, surprised me amidst my grief. Nobody, not even the grief support counselors, could have prepared me for this body hunger, the animal part of loss. Nobody warned me about the heavy emptiness of a chest no longer pressed, about the craving of skin suddenly deprived of touch, a dissolution that consumes the body like leprosy. It’s not lust, exactly, or desire, or even longing; it’s the way skin cries. Nobody talks about it, but widows know. Dogs know too. It’s what makes suburban dogs leap onto chests and laps against all training. It’s why street dogs might, in time, forego their instinct for survival to bow their heads into a human palm.
Summer of the Cicadas
FICTION

CHELSEA CATHERINE

Summer of the Cicadas follows Jess as she investigates a strange brood of seventeen-year-old Magicicadas that have infected her rural West Virginian town.

Summer of the Cicadas is about a West Virginian town where a brood of Magicicadas emerges for the first time in seventeen years. The cicadas damage crops and trees, and swarm locals. Jessica, a former cop whose entire family was killed almost two years ago in a car crash, is deputized during the crisis. Throughout the book, Jessica must deal with her feelings for her sister’s best friend, Natasha, who is a town council member. Although the two are close, their relationship is tested as the cicadas wreak havoc. In addition to her feelings for Natasha, she also must confront her own prior drug abuse as well as her growing alcohol dependency. The town sheriff, Mason, is a great supporter of Jessica, but she still must deal with the danger of the swarm while also navigating small town politics, sexism, homophobia, and classism. She is well known, and not well-liked. As the swarm grows more aggressive, Jessica and Mason decide that Fish and Wildlife Service must be called in. After Fish and Wildlife removes the swarm, Jessica must also confront the two-year anniversary of her family’s passing, Natasha’s budding romance with a local editor, as well as a sudden but devastating death that changes everything.

“Many authors are good at writing about the body. Few authors excel at writing the body of the world, the way it moves through everyone: cicadas owning us, making us restless, flirtatious, fearful even; shadows hiding our shadows; the defeating pines; the teasing sun. Chelsea Catherine creates a natural world as real as her characters. But it’s not about her deft ability at description or setting; it’s about her deep understanding of how everything moves as one—people, moods, moments, manifestations—and the modern Romance (with a capital R) of it all.”
—Erica Dawson, author of When Rap Spoke Straight to God

“Chelsea Catherine is a bright, raw, original new voice in American fiction. Her prose is electric. And Summer of Cicadas was a novel I couldn’t put down.”
—Thomas Christopher Greene, author of The Perfect Liar

Chelsea Catherine is a PEN Short Story Prize Nominee, a winner of the Raymond Carver Fiction Contest in 2016, a Sterling Watson fellow, and an Ann McKee Grant recipient. Her novella Blindsided won the Clay Reynolds Novella Prize and was published in October of 2018. Her nonfiction recently won the Mary C. Mohr Award through the Southern Indiana Review. A native Vermonter, Catherine lived in Key West for two years where she was secretary of the Key West Writers Guild. She now lives in St. Petersburg, FL.
The sunlight behind me is momentarily blocked by clouds, removing the warmth from my back. I shiver. The rules are the same as they would be anywhere. Be wary, walk in groups. Don’t touch the crops. Let us know if you see anything suspicious. I’ve done this before. In DC, I did it a million times. But now I feel this hesitation, like I don’t actually know what I’m doing anymore. “Call Mason,” I say. “See if he’ll get her to do it.”

Brenda looks at me. A smile crosses her face. She touches my forearm, rolling the fabric of the uniform between her fingers. The warmth of her hand bleeds through to my skin. “Still fits you good.”

Brenda was there when Mason dragged me into that cell. She visited in the wee hours of the morning when I was detoxing and sweating and crying and wanting to die. She put a cool towel on my forehead and told me it would pass soon, I just had to hang on.

I still want to die sometimes, but I’m better at pretending. And she’s still around, laying her hand on my shoulder like I fucking matter.
Beyond Repair: Living In a Fractured State
MEMOIR IN ESSAYS
SEBASTIAN MATTHEWS

After recovering from a head-on collision and its attendant trauma, the author struggles to reconnect to a world in the throes of a form of cultural PTSD.

In 2011, my family was in a major car accident. We were hit head-on by a man in the throes of a heart attack. It took three years to recover from our injuries, and a couple more to deal with the aftereffects of trauma. When I finally returned to the world—as father and husband, friend and brother, writer and citizen—it became clear that our society was in its own traumatized state—reeling from the string of police shootings of unarmed African Americans, stunned by yet one more mass shooting. The people around me were displaying all the signs of PTSD—jumpiness, irritability, numbness—and, concordantly, my interactions out in daily life were becoming more dysfunctional, at times downright hostile. Us against them. Red vs. blue. Black vs. white. Rich vs. poor. That we were living in a progressive town inside a conservative county in the Mountain South only made things more volatile. I decided that if we were all living in a fractured society no longer recognizable, then it was up to me to re-engage in it. I would enter into encounters with people as conscious as possible of the potential divides and misunderstandings between us. I started with my neighborhood and town, then moved out into the counties around us, then traveled further out into the country. My goal: to connect.

“Beyond Repair: Living in a Fractured State is a portrait of community in traumatized times. Sebastian Matthews documents dislocation, both psychic and physical, in these tightly crafted nonfiction vignettes. Whether the speaker is on the sidelines at his child’s soccer game, seeking help from the credit card fraud hotline, or in the elevator with a confused Alzheimer’s sufferer, Matthews enacts the difficulty and necessity of compassion. With wryly insightful observations, Beyond Repair brings us closer with every sentence to the deep repairing we need.”
—Beth Ann Fennelly, author of Heating & Cooling

Sebastian Matthews is the author of a memoir, In My Father’s Footsteps, and two books of poetry, We Generous and Miracle Day. His hybrid collection of poetry and prose, Beginner’s Guide to a Head-on Collision, won the Independent Publisher Book Awards’ silver medal. Matthews is also the author of The Life & Times of American Crow, a “collage novel in eleven chapbooks.” His work has appeared in or on, among other places, the Atlantic, Blackbird, the Common, Georgia Review, Poetry Daily, Poets & Writers, the Sun, Virginia Quarterly Review, and the Writer’s Almanac. Learn more at sebastianmatthews.com.
After ordering dinner, my mom and I slip outside and walk out to the end of the spit of land. It’s a lovely evening, just now getting a little nippy as the sun drops behind the marsh. On our way back, my mom says hey to an older man standing with his lady friend in the doorway of the club, which is not yet open for the night’s business.

“Hey, you came!”

It’s the man who told her about the place earlier that day! He seems surprised and genuinely pleased.

We wander back, drawn by the aromatics mixing with the salt marsh smells. When the dinner arrives, everyone quiets down to get to the serious business of eating. The food is tasty. Ali orders the low-country shrimp. There are at least two sides of ribs, a little pulled pork. A seafood platter. Another rounds of drinks. The table stops talking for a while in that universal sign of approval: the food’s just too good for conversation.

The place starts to empty out. Brother Bill joins me outside as the bill gets settled.

There’s a skittish, sketchy mutt lurking nearby under a tree. We leave it alone. Funky hip-hop seeps from a car further down the lot, bass pulsing like a tide. Men are scattered about, talking in pairs, leaning against cars. We pass a row of young men, all hip-hop swagger and cool car bravado. I put my hand out at my side, fingers splayed, as a way to say hey. One guy gives a nod to acknowledge our presence—not friendly but not hostile either.

More young men arrive in their tricked out cars, revving and posturing, eager to take back their spot and convert it to their late night scene. As we head back to our group, I do my best to give off a quiet confidence, one that whispers, We’re happy to be here, won’t take anything or try too hard, just enjoying the breeze and booze and the cool scene. Thanks for sharing it all with us for this one evening.
Suitor
POETRY
JOSHUA RIVKIN

Intimate and expansive, plainspoken and lyrical, the poems from this collection explore the complexities of desire, memory, history, and family.

At the heart of Joshua Rivkin’s debut collection Suitor is a profound wrestling with desire, history, and the big questions of how we make and perform a self in the world. In conversation with the confessional tradition, Suitor begins with a sequence of poems about a mother’s boyfriends and lovers, and how these relationships inform the speaker’s own understanding about eros and masculinity. At the center of the book is a lyric essay, “The Haber Problem,” that moves beyond the self and personal history to retell the story of the scientist Fritz Haber. Later sequences and poems reflect on the past with erotic directness, longing, and lyric intensity. With grace and honesty, the poems of Suitor ask what it means to be a suitor in the fullest sense—to follow, to pursue, to chase the inexplicable hunger at the heart of desire.

“For opulence of imagination and spareness of language, for musical savvy and analytical rigor, for a frankness that is both tender and unnerving in its nakedness, Joshua Rivkin's Suitor is one of the best books of poetry, let alone first books, that I've read in a very long time. His prose meditation about his father and the moral culpability of the scientist, his lyrics about sex as a blueprint of the psyche, and his nuanced understanding of how children and parents create the story under the story of our civilization, is mature, formally masterful, and refreshingly free of moralizing cant, blame, or the desire to shame. Best of all, for all its tough-minded skepticism, it’s a book replete with an undeluded hopefulness.”
—Tom Sleigh, author of House of Fact, House of Ruin, and The Land Between Two Rivers: Writing in an Age of Refugees

Joshua Rivkin is the author of Chalk: The Art and Erasure of Cy Twombly, a New York Times Book Review editor’s choice and finalist for 2019 PEN/Jacqueline Bograd Weld Award for Biography and the Marfield Prize, the National Award for Arts Writing. His poems and essays have appeared in the New Yorker, Slate, Southern Review, Virginia Quarterly Review, and Best New Poets. A former Fulbright Fellow in Rome, Italy, as well as a Stegner Fellow in poetry, he has received awards and scholarships from the Sustainable Arts Foundation, the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown, and the Bread Loaf Writers’ Conference.
LIFEGUARD

My father is modest. He didn’t save hundreds from drowning. Just a few dozen. Gathered from the swell, the riptide, rough, rough waves he carried them ashore.

Half-lit, he tells it again. The storm against sky, the lifeguard without fear alone in the water, the crowd gathered to witness.

Here’s what to notice: the danger of weather, failures of the other people to help, we never know what happened to the boy.

This is my humble brag, my bravado, my foolish affection to write the same poem year after year. In some versions I am the lifeguard. In others I’m drowning. Then I’m sky. Then wave.
Open the Dark

POETRY

MARIE TOZIER

Marie Tozier’s poems weave together the ebb and flow of land, sea, and time to evoke the vibrant scent and taste of Inupiaq Alaska.

Marie Tozier’s *Open the Dark* is an exquisite collection of poems depicting a generational tapestry woven with the shared ebb and flow of land and sea and time. Loving hands, dyed sweet with raspberries and lingonberries, pass ancestral knowledge—of the hunt for seal and crab to pressing ironless, ruler-straight seams—from grandmother to mother, mother to daughter. This is a collection that beckons, like a mother’s warm embrace, into the vibrant scent and taste of Inupiaq Alaska.

“A sure sense of emplacement might be one of the most elusive and valuable qualities a poet can embody. Marie Tozier’s first book of poems clearly is emplaced in family, community, geography, history, and the seasonality of animals and plants in Western Alaska. An echo of Lorine Niedecker’s limpid trust in the truths of the physical world and the rage and sorrow of Layli Long Soldier’s work against the harm of cultural silencing rings through *Open the Dark*. Trust this direct, clear voice. Open yourself.”
—Elizabeth Bradfield, author of *Toward Antarctica*

“*Open the Dark* is a book of understated lyric power. The traditional narratives of love and loss, which give us the lyric, are taking place in a setting among a people only recently making their way into the American canon. The low landscape of the north, with its arduously gathered gifts of subsistence, birds’ eggs, berries, seals and mammals, the preciousness of sweetness, the implacable demand to labor, add an acute dimension to our usual scenes of love and family. Tozier’s naturally gifted lyric voice, soft-spoken, as is her tradition, conveys unforgettably a culture of steep intergenerational knowledge and honor, as well as its swift losses.”
—Linda McCarriston

Marie Tozier is an Inupiaq poet whose work has been published in the Cirque and Yellow Medicine Review. She is an adjunct instructor for UAF Northwest Campus and has taught sewing, quilting, knitting and qiviut processing, and writing classes. She is also a contributor to the Anchorage Daily News. During her low-residency MFA at the University of Alaska, Anchorage, Tozier focused on identity in poetry. As a staff member at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, she took part in the Robert Wood Johnson Global Solutions Partnership, which allowed Tozier to visit Aotearoa (New Zealand) and learn about Māori education and culture. She also appeared on an episode of the US version of *Who Wants To Be a Millionaire?* in October 2000. She was the first Alaskan contestant to make it past the “Fastest Finger First” round and to play in the hot seat. Tozier lives in Nome, Alaska, with her husband and children.
Aakuaksrak

One spring, sand hill cranes flew into sight.
Having landed, they became hard to spot,
Their bodies and wings dirt brown,
The color of dead willow leaves.
That fall, the crane wife fed her husband
Cranberries.
He balked. He made fun
Of the tiny morsel. That night, while he slept,
She dressed his eyes in red berry pulp.
Staining him for life.

SPECIFICATIONS
Poetry / Native American, Alaskan
August 11, 2020
978-1-59709-920-2 · $15.95
6 X 9 · 72pp · trade paper
In *The Horse Who Bears Me Away*, characters fall into the depths of an American darkness, but in the end struggle back into the light where clarity and freedom are possible.

In the first section of *The Horse Who Bears Me Away*, “The Fall,” an assortment of characters descend inwardly to the point of personal despair. In the second section, “Anywhere But Omaha,” they begin, with difficulty, to see more clearly who and what they are and to climb their way out of the nadir. In the final section, “Mutation,” the characters embark on a path to transformation—an awakening into a new way of seeing and existing in a world that is constantly testing the validity of their identities. This collection of poems, Peterson’s seventh, challenges readers to consciously embrace the dark side of their American psyche and to reach past it to a new way of being at peace with both the known and the unknown, which is called freedom.

“The poems in Jim Peterson’s *The Horse Who Bears Me Away* live and breathe within the world of flesh, through bodies that discover and rediscover themselves in strange and miraculous ways. Voices, too, animate these pages—the voices of laid-off laborers, hobos, crows, cougars, slash pines, wind ‘voicing its concern,’ mockingbirds, lost and dying friends, and waitresses in places where ‘hands know their roles by heart.’ From the stunning prologue, where the speaker merges with the body and spirit of a horse, to the epilogue, in which a dream strips him bare ‘as if fresh from creation,’ Peterson invites us, his lucky readers, ‘to ease into these hands and feet, / pulling this body on like an old coat / that was made for you.’”

—Rebecca McClanahan

THE HORSE

In the enormity of bone and flesh
that splits the night with blood and breath;
in the rising brushstroke of pastern, fetlock,
cannon bone and stifle; in the rolling sloop
of dock, croup, withers and poll

I discover my body.
In the barrel that takes to the grip of thighs,
the flank that accepts the needling heel;
in the mane where I bury my hands at last;
in the forelock and muzzle of that long face;

in the chin groove, jaw and throat
that swallows my words like cracked oats;
in the two black eyes that glean the full circle
of horizon; in the shell-song of each ear;
in the heart, in the heart, the horse who bears me away.

SPECIFICATIONS
Poetry / Southern, Grief, Inspirational
September 22, 2020
978-1-59709-411-5 · $17.95
6 X 9 · 160pp · tradepaper
Wave If You Can See Me
POEMS

SUSAN LUDVIGSON

Ludvigson explores the illness and death of her husband, along with her own ventures into the visual arts in this collection of poetry.

The running theme through the collection Wave If You Can See Me is the progression of illnesses resulting in the death of the poet’s husband, fiction writer Scott Ely, from the effects of Agent Orange in Vietnam. Interspersed with these poems are her own explorations—in part distraction from the pain of watching her husband’s decline, in part a long-held desire—into painting.

“Here, Susan Ludvigson considers the loss of a husband against intricate, often dreamlike landscapes where cockatiels multiply magically in their cages, remembered foreign cities become ominous and strange, and the deceased unfolds into the present, tangible and real. These plainspoken poems conceal enormous complexities of emotion and thought—mournful, hopeful, present to the inevitability of loss and the fact of time. I have long admired Susan Ludvigson’s poetry, and this is her most moving book yet, one I know I’ll return to gladly.”
—Kevin Pruefer

“Susan Ludvigson’s gleaming poems—poems about the slow death of her husband Scot Ely—speak to us in a voice of such hushed intimacy, we’d follow her anywhere—into her back garden with its roses and feathery pecan trees, into her dining room of birds and bougainvilleas, even into those darker or unconscious spaces where trouble mounts, ‘where everything solid turns liquid,’ and nothing is as it should be. These are poems I cannot do without.”
—Dannye Powell, winner of the Brockman Campbell Award, fellowships in poetry from the NEA, and the former editor for the Charlotte Observer.

Susan Ludvigson has published ten collections of poems, most with LSU Press. She has received Guggenheim, Rockefeller, NEA, Fulbright, and Witter-Bynner fellowships as well as North and South Carolina Fellowships. She represented the US at writers’ meetings in Belgium, Canada, France, and the former Yugoslavia. Journal publications include the Atlantic Monthly, the Nation, Poetry, Georgia Review, Gettysburg Review, and Five Points. Now Professor Emerita at Winthrop University, she also served as poet-in-residence at the University of South Carolina and Appalachian State University. The Library of Congress recorded a reading of her poems in 1995. She is the former director of the Lena Miles-Wever Todd Poetry series.
I Want to Say Something

This is the way I picture the universe,
an infinity of stitches, each somehow entwined
with whatever it is that makes a whole, but the pattern
impenetrable and earth herself a miniscule morsel of frizz
in an ever-expanding sleeve, the decorative whorl we’ve seen
in photos from our moon likely invisible
to anyone else in the cosmos. Each particle
of murderer, priest, child, of each extinct horse
and tortoise and bone we can’t identify, linked.
What will it take to save Ty?

This is the question that haunts Claire and Shep Durant in the wake of their four-year-old’s disappearance. Until this moment, Port Blair’s British surgeon and his young wife, a promising anthropologist, have led a charmed life in the colonial backwaters of India’s Andaman Islands—thanks in part to Naila, a local girl who shares their mysteriously mute son’s silent language. But with the war closing in and mandatory evacuation underway, the Durants don’t realize until too late that Naila and Ty have vanished. While Claire sails for Calcutta, Shep stays to search for the children. Days later, the Japanese invade the Andamans, cutting off all communication. Fueled by guilt and anguish, Claire uses her unique knowledge of the islands’ tribes to make herself indispensable to an all-male reconnaissance team headed back behind enemy lines. Her secret plan: rescue Shep and Ty. Through the brutal odyssey that follows, she’ll discover truths about sacrifice that both shatter and transcend her understanding of devotion.

“An absolutely gorgeous historical novel about ambition, culture clash, love, atonement, and one silent boy, set against the backdrop of a tribe in the Andamans struggling with British rule. So blisteringly alive, you feel the swampy heat and the bugs; so emotionally true, it grips at every page. Just magnificent and not to be missed.
—Caroline Leavitt, New York Times Bestselling author of *Pictures of You*

**Aimee Liu** is the bestselling author of the novels *Flash House*, *Cloud Mountain*, and *Face* and the memoirs *Gaining: The Truth About Life After Eating Disorders* and *Solitaire*. Her books have been translated into more than a dozen languages, published as a Literary Guild Super Release, and serialized in *Good Housekeeping*. She’s received a Barnes & Noble Discover Great New Writers Award, a Bosque Fiction Prize, and special mention by the Pushcart Prize. Her essays have appeared in the *Los Angeles Review of Books*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *Poets & Writers*, and many other periodicals and anthologies. A past president of the national literary organization PEN Center USA, she holds an MFA in creative writing from Bennington College and is on the faculty of Goddard College’s MFA in creative writing program at Port Townsend, WA. She lives in Los Angeles.
Subduction

KRISTEN MILLARES YOUNG

Fleeing the shattered remains of her marriage and a betrayal by her sister, in the throes of a midlife freefall, Latina anthropologist Claudia retreats from Seattle to Neah Bay, a Native American whaling village on the jagged Pacific coast. Claudia yearns to lose herself to the songs of the tribe and the secrets of her guide, a spirited hoarder named Maggie. But when, spurred by his mother’s failing memory, Maggie’s prodigal son Peter returns seeking answers to his father’s murder, Claudia discovers in him the abandon she craves. Through the passionate and violent collision of these two outsiders, Subduction portrays not only their strange allegiance after grievous losses but also their imperfect attempts to find community on the Makah Indian Reservation.

“The brilliance of Subduction only suggests the wonders to come. It is a good day for us when Kristen Millares Young puts pen to paper. Highly recommended.”
—Luis Alberto Urrea, winner of the American Book Award, Lannan Literary Award and American Academy of Arts and Letters Fiction award, finalist for the Pulitzer Prize, author of The House of Broken Angels, The Devil’s Highway, Queen of America, Into the Beautiful North, and The Hummingbird’s Daughter.

Kristen Millares Young is a prize-winning journalist and essayist whose work has appeared in the Washington Post, the Guardian and the New York Times, along with the anthologies Pie & Whiskey, a 2017 New York Times New & Notable Book, and Latina Outsiders: Remaking Latina Identity. The current Prose Writer-in-Residence at Hugo House, Kristen was the researcher for the New York Times team that produced “Snow Fall,” which won a Pulitzer Prize. She graduated from Harvard with a degree in history and literature, later earning her MFA from the University of Washington. Kristen serves as board chair of InvestigateWest, a nonprofit news studio she cofounded in Seattle, where she lives with her family.
In the Key of New York City
MEMOIR IN ESSAYS

REBECCA MCCLANAHAN

Our lives are sublets anyway, and too quickly gone at that.

Against the advice of family and friends, a middle-aged couple leaves their home and jobs in North Carolina to pursue a long-held desire: to live in New York City. As they struggle to find work and forge friendships in a city of strangers, Rebecca takes her mother’s advice to “make a home wherever you land.” She finds it in surprising ways: in overheard conversations in parks and subway stations, cries sifted through apartment walls, and in encounters with strangers dispensing unexpected wisdom. The 9/11 attacks and a serious cancer surgery turn her attention inward. Inner and outer landscapes merge, her life touching the lives of now-familiar strangers. Alternating between brief vignettes and sustained narratives, Rebecca McClanahan tracks the heartbeat of New York, finding in each face she meets the cumulative loss, joy, and stubborn resilience of a city that has claimed her for its own.

“A reader may find herself wondering (as I did) what lengths she would go to save a squirrel trapped outside her apartment window, what she might learn when a very odd duck sits next to her on a city bench and strikes up a conversation, how to fathom the destruction of the World Trade Center as a newcomer. This marvelous book is a treasure chest of wisdom and humility and humor and discovery. I read it in one sitting. So will you.” —Abigail Thomas, New York Times bestselling author of A Three Dog Life and Safekeeping

Rebecca McClanahan, author of ten books, has received two Pushcart Prizes, the Glasgow Award in nonfiction, the J. Howard and Barbara M. J. Wood Prize from Poetry magazine, and four fellowships from the New York Foundation for the Arts and the North Carolina Arts Council. Her work has appeared in Best American Essays, Best American Poetry, the Georgia Review, the Kenyon Review, the Sun, and in anthologies published by Doubleday, Simon & Schuster, Norton, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, Bedford/St. Martin’s, and numerous others. She teaches in the MFA programs of Queens University and Rainier Writing Workshop and lives with her husband, video producer Donald Devet, in Charlotte, North Carolina.

SPECIFICATIONS
Nonfiction / Personal Memoirs, Women
May 19, 2020
978-1-59709-850-2 • $14.95
5 x 8 • 176pp • tradepaper
Tea by the Sea

DONNA HEMANS

From Brooklyn to the island of Jamaica, this book traces a mother’s circuitous route to find the daughter taken from her at birth.

A seventeen-year-old taken from her mother at birth, an Episcopal priest with a daughter whose face he cannot bear to see, a mother weary of searching for her lost child: *Tea by the Sea* is their story—that of a family uniting and unraveling.

To find the daughter taken from her, Plum Valentine must find the child’s father who walked out of a hospital with the day-old baby girl without explanation. Seventeen years later, weary of her unfruitful search, Plum sees an article in a community newspaper with a photo of the man for whom she has spent half her life searching. He has become an Episcopal priest. Her plan: confront him and walk away with the daughter he took from her. From Brooklyn to the island of Jamaica, *Tea by the Sea* traces Plum’s circuitous route to find her daughter and how Plum’s and the priest’s love came apart.

“The forbidden love story of Plum and Lenworth comes alive in this heart-rending novel, *Tea by the Sea*. Hemans has a stunning ability to give words to that elusive feeling of emptiness, and the longing for redemption is palpable. In Hemans’s deft hands, regrets are explored with precision and compassion so that the reader finds herself unable to turn against even characters who have committed the most wretched betrayals. *Tea by the Sea* is like the story told in a grandmother’s kitchen with the odors of fried dumplings and saltfish wafting into mouths that are set agape at the heady twists and turns delivered in an urgent and beautiful prose.”

—Lauren Francis-Sharma, author of *’Til the Well Runs Dry*

Jamaican-born Donna Hemans is the author of the novel *River Woman*, winner of the 2003–4 Towson University Prize for Literature. *Tea by the Sea*, for which she won the Lignum Vitae Una Marson Award for Adult Literature, is her second novel. Her short fiction has appeared in the *Caribbean Writer*, *Crab Orchard Review*, *Witness*, and the anthology *Stories from Blue Latitudes: Caribbean Women Writers at Home and Abroad*, among others. She received her undergraduate degree from Fordham University and an MFA from American University. She lives in Greenbelt, Maryland.
Her Sister’s Tattoo
NOVEL

ELLEN MEEROPOL

Two sisters. One badly injured cop. A family torn between loyalty and politics.

Rosa and Esther Cohen march through downtown Detroit in August 1968, protesting the war in Vietnam in harmony with their family’s tradition of activism. The march is peaceful, but when a bloodied teenager describes a battle with mounted police a few blocks away, the young women hurry to offer assistance. Trying to stop the violence, the sisters instead intensify it. An officer is seriously injured; they are arrested and charged with conspiracy and attempted murder. For Rosa, their arrest offers another way to protest an unacceptable war. Esther wants to avoid prison to stay home with her infant daughter, Molly. She agrees to accept a plea bargain offer and testify against Rosa at trial. The consequences of these actions lead one sister underground and to prison, the other to leave town to bury her past in a new life. Molly grows up unaware of her family history until she meets Rosa’s daughter, her cousin Emma, at summer camp. Told from multiple points of view and through the sisters’ never-mailed letters, Rosa and Esther’s story is bracketed by the Vietnam and Iraq wars. It explores the thorny intersection of sibling loyalty and political beliefs.

“Her Sister’s Tattoo is a story not just of two sisters but of our country, where politics have so often torn apart families, loved ones, and communities. This tenderly told novel brings humanity to all sides of struggle, lifting us with its grace, compassion, and hope for the future. I highly recommend.”
—Rene Denfeld, author of The Child Finder

Ellen Meeropol is the author of three previous novels: Kinship of Clover (Women’s National Book Association Great Group Read and literary fiction finalist for the Best Book Award), On Hurricane Island (semi-finalist for the Massachusetts Book Award), and House Arrest. Her recent essay publications include Ms. magazine, Lilith magazine, the Boston Globe, and Guernica. Ellen’s dramatic script telling the story of the Rosenberg Fund for Children was produced most recently in Manhattan featuring Eve Ensler, Angela Davis, and Cotter Smith. A founding member of Straw Dog Writers Guild, Ellen leads their Social Justice Writing project. She lives in Northampton, MA.

SPECIFICATIONS
Fiction / Historical Fiction, Family, Politics
April 7, 2020
978-1-59709-844-1 · $17.95
5.5 x 8.5 · 296 pp · tradepaper
We Need to Talk:  
A Memoir About Wealth  
MEMOIR  
JENNIFER RISHER

Many books offer advice on how to get rich. Some inspire us with a fantasy of being rich. Others poke fun at the rich. This book is an honest look at what it’s really like to have a lot of money.

In 1991, at twenty-five years old, Jennifer took a job at Microsoft and got lucky. She met her future husband, David, and the stock options she was granted were worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. His were worth far more. Years later, when David joined a small, unknown startup called Amazon.com, they got lucky again. They were in their early thirties and had tens of millions of dollars. It was amazing. The freedom and benefits were obvious. But after growing up saving her pennies and being wary of the rich, Jennifer was embarrassed to have joined their ranks. She wasn’t worried about being liked for her money; she was worried about being hated for it. People looked at her differently. She didn’t know how to ensure her children stayed motivated and not entitled, was shocked when a friend asked for $25,000, discovered philanthropy isn’t as straightforward as just writing a check, and grappled with the meaning of “enough.” For years, she didn’t share her dilemmas with others for fear of being judged. No one talks about money—but we should.

“In this heartfelt memoir, Risher walks us through both the advantages and the challenges that wealth cultivates. Ultimately, as she says, ‘We are all ninety-nine percent the same.’”
—Madeline Levine, PhD, author of The Price of Privilege, Teach Your Children Well, and Ready or Not

Jennifer Risher was born in Seattle, Washington, grew up in Oregon, and graduated from Connecticut College in 1987 with a degree in art history. She taught English at a steel company in Tokyo for two years, had two short stints at advertising agencies in Seattle, then joined Microsoft in 1991 where she worked as a recruiter and then as a product manager. Her passions include tennis, art, cooking, laughter, and doing her best to make a positive difference in her community. She and her husband, David, have two daughters and live in San Francisco, where David is CEO of Worldreader, a nonprofit he cofounded with a mission to create a world where everyone is a reader.

SPECIFICATIONS  
Nonfiction / Personal Memoirs, Rich & Famous, Success  
978-1-93909-646-3 · $26.95  
5.5 x 8.5 · 272 pp · tradepaper
Tess Taylor’s anticipated fourth book traces literal and metaphorical fault lines—rifts between past and present, childhood and adulthood, what was and what is.

Circling Taylor’s hometown—an ordinary suburb lying along the Hayward fault—these poems unearth strata that include a Spanish land grant, a bloody land grab, gun violence, mass homelessness, valley girls, strip malls, redwood trees, and the painful history of Japanese internment. What emerges is a powerful core sample of America at the brink—an elegy tuned equally to maternal and geologic time. Sorrowful and furious, tender and fierce, Rift Zone is observant and relentlessly curious—a fearsome tremor of a book.

“In Rift Zone, Tess Taylor’s brilliant third collection, we encounter a magisterial range of subjects, from the geologic to the civic to the intimately personal. This book is a confident poetic engagement with the vital issues of our time, including the disastrous consequences of human activity on our climate and its effect on the public and private spheres. Rooted in the shifting California landscape, this elegiac yet hopeful book is a necessary addition to the corpus of work dedicated to grieving the world as we know it.”

—Ada Limón, author of The Carrying

The San Francisco Chronicle hailed Tess Taylor’s first book, The Forage House, as “stunning.” Critic Stephanie Burt called Work & Days, her second book, “our moment’s Georgic,” and it was named one of the ten best books of poetry of 2016 by the New York Times. Taylor’s poetry and nonfiction appear widely; she chairs the poetry committee of the National Book Critics Circle and is the on-air poetry reviewer for NPR’s All Things Considered. She was a Distinguished Fulbright US Scholar at the Seamus Heaney Centre in Queen’s University in Belfast, Northern Ireland, and Anne Spencer Writer in Residence at Randolph College. Taylor grew up and lives in El Cerrito, California.
After Rubén
POEMS
FRANCISCO ARAGÓN

This collection engages complicated relationships, including that of a gay son and his immigrant father.

After Rubén unfolds as a decades-long journey in poems and prose, braiding the personal, the political and the historical, interspersing along the way English-language versions and riffs of a Spanish-language master: Rubén Darío. Whether it’s biting portraits of public figures, or nuanced sketches of his father, Francisco Aragón has assembled his most expansive collection to date, evoking his native San Francisco, but also imagining ancestral spaces in Nicaragua. Readers will encounter pieces that splice lines from literary forebearers, a moving elegy to a sibling, a surprising epistle from the grave. In short: a book that is both trajectory and mosaic, complicating the conversation surrounding poetry in the Americas—above all as it relates to Latinx and queer poetics.

“Sonically charged lines that delve into solitude, travel, separation, grief, and the complex life of the outsider allow these poems to speak both to the individual Latinx experience and the universal desire to belong, to be heard.”
—Ada Limón, author of The Carrying and Bright Dead Things

Francisco Aragón is the son of Nicaraguan immigrants. He is the author of Puerta del Sol and Glow of Our Sweat, as well as editor of The Wind Shifts: New Latino Poetry. His poems have appeared in twenty anthologies, most recently The Wandering Song: Central American Writing in the United States (Tia Chucha Press) and Nepantla: An Anthology Dedicated to Queer Poets of Color (Nightbook Books). Others include Inventions of Farewell: A Book of Elegies (W.W. Norton), Deep Travel: American Poets Abroad (Ninebark Press), and Poetry of Resistance: Voices for Social Justice (University of Arizona Press). In 2017, he was a finalist for Split This Rock’s Freedom Plow Award for Poetry & Activism. A native of San Francisco, CA, he directs Letras Latinas, the literary initiative at the University of Notre Dame’s Institute for Latino Studies. Aragón divides his time between Washington, D.C. and South Bend, IN.

SPECIFICATIONS
Poetry / Latin American, LGBT
May 5, 2020
978-1-59709-857-1 · $17.95
6 x 9 · 160pp · tradepaper
Sugar, Smoke, Song
SHORT STORIES

REEMA RAJBANSHI

A short fiction debut about girls and women caught between their desires, others’ expectations, and unexpected disaster, and how they maneuver with humor and rage into wilder, surviving selves.

Sugar, Smoke, Song is a collection of nine linked stories set in the Bronx, California, India, and Brazil. Following the secrets and passions of young women, these stories and their narrators cross genres and rules to arrive at unforeseen lives.

A subway rider remembers enacting the gods with her estranged twin, a concert usher discovers her tango-dancing boyfriend’s lover, and a literacy worker confesses the gambles she and others have lost through the bluesy singers she admires. Told through semi-experimental play with nonlinear plots, plural narrators, and hybrid prose, these stories embody the experiences of Asian American women carrying histories both unseen and cyclically lived.

“The fire and guts of this material made a helix with the poetics and heart of the story. I was left breathless several times. This writer is on the cusp of inventing a signature language meant for telling this particular story.”
—Lidia Yuknavitch, author of The Book of Joan

Reema Rajbanshi is a creative and critical writer born in Miami and raised in the Bronx. Her short stories have been published in print and online journals such as Chicago Quarterly Review and Blackbird and explore the nonlinear lines of girlhood, violence, and migration. As a graduate of the UC Davis writing program, she plays with semi-experimental forms and crafts narratives of the body. As a graduate of UC San Diego in literature, her research work on global indigeneities, Brazil, and Northeast India also appear across her creative fiction and nonfiction. Among her awards and fellowships are travel grants from her alma mater, Harvard University, and a Pushcart Prize nomination. She currently teaches at Haverford College and lives in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Sugar, Smoke, Song is her first book.

SPECIFICATIONS
Short Fiction / Family Life, Siblings, Asian American
June 23, 2020
978-1-59709-891-5 · $16.95
5.5 x 8.5 · 232pp · tradepaper
Moon Jar
POEMS

Didi Jackson

In her intimately compelling debut collection, Didi Jackson explores the life-altering and heart-rending loss of a husband to suicide.

In an effort to understand this unforeseen and inexplicable act, she maps with immense candor the emotional difficulty of continuing her responsibility as a mother while attempting to regain a sense of normalcy. While grief never fully subsides, Jackson allows herself over time to rediscover love as she contends with the brutal and haunting grip of human trauma. These affirmative poems, precise and grace-begetting, exhibit an admirable self-devotion to healing and recovery that is metamorphic and cathartic. Turning to biblical narratives as well as seminal works of art by the likes of Hildegard of Bingen, Pablo Picasso, Sappho, Mark Rothko, Kazimir Malevich, Hieronymus Bosch, and Frédéric Chopin, she orchestrates a tableau of conversations around human suffering, the natural world, and impermanence. And like the Korean porcelain moon jar, these poems mark and celebrate the imperfection of existence. At once raw and vulnerable, Moon Jar shows lyric poetry to be a fundamental and permanent force for survival.

“Moon Jar is one of the loveliest and most honest books about grief and the long road back to hope and love that I’ve read in a very long time. These poems tell Didi Jackson’s story of losing her husband to suicide and the enormous grief of that loss. But they also show us how we survive such a loss, and that love and life can be ours again. I read this book once, and then again, and again. Jackson’s words comfort and remind us what it means to be vulnerable and human.”

—Ann Hood

Didi Jackson’s poems have appeared in the New Yorker, New England Review, Ploughshares, and elsewhere. After having lived most of her life in Florida, she currently lives in South Burlington, Vermont and teaches creative writing at the University of Vermont.
Worship the Pig
POEMS

GAYLORD BREWER

This is Gaylord Brewer’s most ambitious and deeply felt collection of poetry yet in three decades of striving to reconcile the wild world with the haunting voice inside—an astounding, harrowing achievement.

Gaylord Brewer’s eleventh collection is by the poet’s own definition his “Americas book.” The migration begins from his Tennessee home to the Inside Passage of Alaska, then detours sharply south in a return to his beloved Costa Rica, then onward finally to the qualified paradise of Brazil’s Ilhabela. Brewer’s persistent obsessions—translating the call and challenge of the feral world, negotiating some truce with private ghosts—have never been more poignantly and sharply drawn. From chiseled lyrics to more expansive narratives—by turns reserved and raucous, always heartfelt and riveting—these new poems exhilarate. “No schematic for conquest, / no reckless conclusions, // no tenuous argument for connection / beyond the simple truth / of what accrues together.” At mid-career, the author called “the most natural poet in the country” by the Asheville Poetry Review continues to astonish.

“Worship the Pig—there, in one breath, the sacred and the profane. Just know that in Gaylord Brewer’s world, the profane is also venerable, what is simple is likewise profound, and what is commonplace is remarkable. Brewer is an enchanter, who casts his spell with words that are clear, precise, and illuminating, words that carry us away to a more vitalizing world than the one we live in, to a world of simple pleasures and bountiful blessings. One may read this book as a litany of reasons for living an intentional life, even in the face of bracing sadness. Brewer knows that the first act of writing is noticing, and that paying attention is giving praise. I suggest you buy this book, pour yourself a drink, settle into your easy chair, and dive in. You won’t come up for air until you’re done. That’s how I read it. Twice. And I’m still seeing the world through its invigorating lens.”
—John Dufresne

Gaylord Brewer is the author of fifteen previous books of poetry and prose, and his poems have appeared in Best American Poetry and The Bedford Introduction to Literature.

SPECIFICATIONS
Poetry / American, Nature
June 16, 2020
978-1-59709-852-6 · $18.95
6 x 9 · 152pp · tradepaper
Don’t Go Crazy Without Me
NONFICTION
DEBORAH A. LOTT

This book tells the tragicomic coming of age story of a girl who grew up under the seductive sway of her outrageously eccentric father.

He taught her how to have fun; he also taught her to fear food poisoning, other children’s infectious diseases, and the contaminating propensities of the world at large. Alienated from her emotionally distant mother, the girl bonded closely with her father and his worldview. When he plunged from neurotic to full-blown psychotic, she nearly followed him. Sanity is not always a choice, but for the sixteen-year-old, decisions had to be made and lines drawn between reality and what her mother called her “overactive imagination.” She would have to give up beliefs carried by the infectious agent of her father’s love. Saving herself would require an unconventional reading of Moby Dick, sexual pleasure in the body that had confounded her, and entry into the larger world of political activism as a volunteer in Robert F. Kennedy’s presidential campaign. After attending his last stop at the Ambassador Hotel the night of his assassination, she would come to a new reckoning with loss and with engagement beyond the confines of her family. Ultimately, she would find a way to turn her grief into love.

Deborah A. Lott’s memoirs, essays, and reportage have been published in the Rumpus, Salon, the Alaska Quarterly Review, Bellingham Review, Black Warrior Review, Cimarron Review, the Los Angeles Times, StoryQuarterly, the Good Men Project, the nervous breakdown, and many other places. Her family’s legacy of hypochondria was featured on NPR’s This American Life. Her first book, In Session: the Bond between Women and their Therapists, offered an unprecedented look at psychotherapy from the perspective of clients interviewed by the author. Her essays have been thrice named as “notables of the year” by Best American Essays. She teaches creative writing and literature at Antioch University, Los Angeles, where she serves as faculty advisor to Two Hawks Quarterly.com. She lives with her husband, Gary Edelstone, in Los Angeles.

SPECIFICATIONS
Nonfiction / Personal Memoirs, Women, Mental Health
April 7, 2020
978-1-59709-815-1 · $16.95
5.5 x 8.5 · 256pp · tradepaper
Mostly Water
MEMOIR
MARY ODDEN

From women cowboys to arctic villages, Mary Odden's linked essays transport the reader along light-filled paths at the top of a shrinking world.

In Mostly Water, essays form a linked memoir that explores the American outback from eastern Oregon horse trails to the arctic and subarctic river towns of Alaska. In these landscapes, Native people and later-comers are entwined in histories as loopy as northern rivers. Odden invites the reader to a vivid patchwork of characters and seldom-seen places, with a soundtrack from fiddle dances and a menu “half potlatch and half potluck.” Events of the churning twenty-first century rise like the sea in these stories—but so do music and love and hope in the precious otherness of nature.

“Destined to become a classic in the literature of the American West, Mary Odden's authentic, profound, and original Mostly Water will thaw parts of you you didn’t even know had frozen. Love, work, animals, food, music: were we to disappear, humanity could be remade of the ingredients here set forth by this remarkable writer. Suffused with wonder, steeped in memory, and written in exquisitely musical prose, the essays in this book serve to harmonize head with heart in a way that can only be called wisdom.”
—Richard Hoffman, Author of Half the House and Love & Fury

Mary Odden's essays have appeared in the Georgia Review, Northwest Review, Nimrod, the Alaska Quarterly Review, and Under Northern Lights, an anthology of contemporary Alaska art and writing. Born in eastern Oregon, she traveled north to do forest fire work in Alaska. She studied writing at the University of Montana and the University of Alaska Fairbanks. She has worked as an aviation dispatcher, village teen counselor, writing teacher, and as publisher/editor of a small newspaper in Alaska's Copper River Valley. In 2015, she received a Rasmuson Foundation Individual Artist Award for the essays gathered in Mostly Water. She lives with her husband in Nelchina, Alaska.
Boy Oh Boy
SHORT STORIES
ZACHARY DOSS

A humorous exploration of loneliness and longing, as well as a confrontation of society’s expectations about love.

Boy Oh Boy is a collection of queer fabulist stories and flash fictions told via second person, asking readers to share Doss’s explorations of joy and longing. Your boyfriend is many boyfriends, possibly all the boyfriends you’ve ever had or will have. But you must ask yourself whether you have them or they have you. Your boyfriend plays jokes on you—plays jokes on the world. He is forever unattainable, and still you love your boyfriend, even when it hurts you. Doss explores how relationships can be all-consuming, how we transform ourselves to fit within their contour. Eventually, you might change so much that you don’t even fit inside your own body. This book is so much about space—the physical, emotional, and mental spheres that everyone inhabits. Doss uses humor to deal with the isolation that each of us experiences—not because we’re alone, but because we’ve become detached from ourselves, our needs, and our desires. Boy Oh Boy is our chance to understand Zachary Doss, as well as our strangest selves.

“There’s a sly and unprepossessing humor to these stories, the feeling of someone waiting for you to notice the joke, though there’s never just one. Zach Doss is a writer to celebrate. He didn’t live long enough to give us more than this, but here is a book that sings like a troubadour under the balcony at midnight, songs of love and trouble, again and again, seemingly effortless and full of charm. Pick it up.”
—Alexander Chee, author of How to Write an Autobiographical Novel

Zachary Doss was a writer and editor whose work appeared in Sonora Review, Fourteen Hills, Fairy Tale Review, Caketrain, DIAGRAM, Paper Darts, and other journals. His short story “Bespoke” was the winner of the 2016 Puerto del Sol Short Fiction Contest. He held an MFA in creative writing from the University of Alabama, where he taught composition and rhetoric, literature, and creative writing. He was also pursuing a PhD in creative writing and literature at the University of Southern California at the time of his death.

SPECIFICATIONS
Short Fiction / Dark Humor, LGBT, Gay
June 2, 2020
978-1-59709-813-7 · $14.95
5 x 8 · 192pp · tradepaper

Winner of the Grace Paley Prize in Short Fiction

DEBUT AUTHOR

RED HEN PRESS 37
Body of Render

POEMS

FELICIA ZAMORA

This collection explores the internal and external impacts on our humanity when political, national, and societal decisions strip away our basic human rights.

What does it mean to be an underrepresented individual in a country where the most powerful seat in the land unashamedly perpetuates racist, misogynistic, homophobic, and classist behaviors? The voices document a journey before and after the last presidential election. These poems cry out for reconsideration of our broken systems to find common and safe ground rooted in equitable treatment of each other as human beings. How do we exude love when being a person of color or underrepresented person in this country means the dominant white-male-able-bodied-heterosexual narrative continues to threaten our voices? This collection carves at the physical, the political, the intimate, and the structural with poems that simultaneously create and encourage voice to seek a path toward collective mending.

"Language is action in these poems, which are utterances of pleading, fighting, and mending in an America we can hardly stand to look at straight on. Body of Render is a book of saying what must be said: ‘say Capitol Hill be voice of all your people, be just; in haunt, you must be voice, must.’ The risks Felicia Zamora takes with form, syntax, and breath pay off in poem after poem—and make Body of Render one of the most dynamic—most transformative—collections I’ve read in years."

—Maggie Smith, author of Good Bones

Felicia Zamora’s books include Of Form & Gather, the 2016 Andrés Montoya Poetry Prize winner, Instrument of Gaps, and & in Open, Marvel. A 2019 CantoMundo fellow, she won the 2015 Tomaž Šalamun Prize and was the 2017 Poet Laureate of Fort Collins, CO. Her poems appear in Academy of American Poets (Poem-A-Day), the Georgia Review, the Missouri Review (Poem of the Week), The Nation, and others. She is the associate poetry editor for Colorado Review and programs manager for the Virginia G. Piper Center for Creative Writing at Arizona State University. She lives in Phoenix, Arizona with her partner Chris.

SPECIFICATIONS

Poetry / Latina, American

May 12, 2020

978-1-59709-975-2 · $16.95

6 x 9 · 104pp · tradepaper

Red Hen Press Benjamin Saltman Award Winner
Intimate and incantatory, this collection is a hypnotic and visceral experience.

Danielle Vogel’s newest collection creates a latticework for repair—the repairing of past trauma, the calling-into-presence of a dissociated self—but does so while keeping the material of this net of thinking in a fragmented, diaphanous state, glowing in the space between the poem and essay. Across three sections of “displacements,” “miniatures,” and “volume,” Vogel initiates readers into the séance of the book; she asks the reader to hold vigil for the most crucial phase of its composition, which can only happen when the reader and she meet at the site of the page, within a “new, interrupted unity.” In The Way a Line Hallucinates Its Own Linearity, accord—writing with, reading with—is always a verb, always kinetic, alchemical, and alive. “It only takes one letter on the page,” Vogel writes, “and we are already inside one another’s lungs.” To consent to walk through these spaces is to give up that part of you that wishes to remain anonymous and un-entrained. You will be grateful that you did.

Danielle Vogel is a poet, lyric essayist and installation artist whose work explores the bonds between language and presence, between a reader and a writer, and how a book—as an extended architecture of a body—might serve as a site of radical transformation. She is the author of Edges & Fray (Wesleyan, 2020) and Between Grammars (Noemi, 2015). Her installations, or “public ceremonies for language,” have been most recently exhibited at RISD Museum, MICA, The University of Arizona’s Poetry Center, and Abecedarian Gallery. She teaches at Wesleyan University and makes her home in New England with the artist Renee Gladman.
Hold Me Tight
POEMS

JASON SCHNEIDERMAN

Schneiderman takes on the anxieties of the personal and political climate with his unique blend of erudition, charm, humor, and earthiness.

In five poetic sequences, Jason Schneiderman’s Hold Me Tight considers life in a new age of anxiety as technology and violence inform new forms of selfhood and apocalypse seems always around the corner. Starting with a long poem about his own struggle to find peace, the collection is searingly grounded in the personal, anchored to Schneiderman’s own life. The collection moves to a sequence of parables about wolves, which obliquely consider intractable political conflicts and the emotional fallout of relationships that are structured around predators and prey. The next sequences focus on technology and art, looking at how technologies extend the possibilities of the human body, which alters what it means to be human. A long set of poems about Chris Burden explore the artist’s movement from the personal, self-inflicted violence of his early work to the larger questions of political violence that inform his later work. In the final sequence, Schneiderman imagines a series of “last things”—in which finality gives meaning to the people and things in question. In the end, Schneiderman’s project invokes a kind of old fashioned humanism, embracing the ruptures in our contemporary ways of living and thinking.

“Jason Schneiderman’s poems are rife with a dark and gorgeous intelligence. If I compare them to a razor in an apple, please understand that I mean both the razor and the apple.”
—Michael Cunningham, winner of the Pulitzer Prize

The Skin of Meaning
POEMS
KEITH FLYNN

Award-winning poet Keith Flynn’s sixth and most wide-ranging collection, seeking to find the tangible analogs and visceral meanings hidden behind the daily bombardment of digital information and hoping to restore the mystery in our involvement with language.

From the etymologies of pop culture, history, astronomy, and rock and roll, these poems fan out into a bold multiplicity of voices and techniques. Flynn’s work illustrates the meaning that is also created through tense collisions and is populated with figures in resistance to the status quo, a gathering as varied as Caravaggio, Nina Simone, Gaudi, Villon, Wonder Woman, and Manolete. The final section examines America’s fascination with violence and death, revealing that “a human being in love with mystery is never finished.” This collection constantly challenges our assumptions about the world we think we see and is teeming with evidence of another invisible world bristling like an underground river beneath our feet.

“For some time, we’ve been waiting for a poet to appear who could adequately confront the vast and deliriously complex matter of the USA—its people, its art, its material and popular culture, its misdeeds and its election mistakes. Also, one who could respond to the artistic legacy of Europe. Keith Flynn is that poet. His range is wider than any poet’s I’m aware of, a range matched by his varied diction and his fluent mastery of syntax. The apparent ease he brings to this thorny project is one of the work’s most impressive aspects. I urge readers to greet this book with the praise it deserves.”
—Alfred Corn, author of Unions

Keith Flynn (www.keithflynn.net) is the award-winning author of seven books, including six collections of poetry, and is the founder and managing editor of the Asheville Poetry Review, which began publishing in 1994

SPECIFICATIONS
Poetry / American
April 14, 2020
978-1-59709-848-9 · $18.95
6 x 9 · 184pp · tradepaper
Established in 1985 by Robert McDowell and Mark Jarman, Story Line Press gained an international reputation as a press that championed narrative and formal poetry, innovative anthologies, and criticism written in a public voice rather than academic style. Despite limited resources, Story Line became one of the most influential literary presses of the era publishing new and established writers.
Imprints & Series

Red Hen Press

Arktoi Books
Arktoi Books publishes high-quality literary fiction and poetry by lesbian writers. The imprint was established in 2006 by editor Eloise Klein Healy.

Boreal Books
Boreal Books was established in 2008 to publish literature and fine art from Alaska. The imprint is edited by Peggy Shumaker, the former State Writer Laureate of Alaska.

DJS Books
DJS Books was formed in 2008 by Ming Di and a group of Chinese poets who tried to independently publish cutting-edge poetry books in China. DJS Books became an imprint of Red Hen Press in 2013.

Quill
Quill publishes literary prose by a queer (LGBTQ) author once per year, chosen by rotating judges through award submissions. The series was founded in 2015 by Tobi Harper.

XENO Books
Xeno Books is an imprint that publishes quirky, well-crafted titles that don’t fall within the boundaries of Red Hen’s regular literary program.

Pighog Press

Story Line Press
Founded in 1982 and acquired as an imprint by Red Hen Press in 2016, Story Line Press publishes poetry with a focus on poetic form and narrative.

Letras Latinas
Letras Latinas, the literary initiative of the University of Notre Dame’s Institute for Latino Studies, in partnership with Red Hen Press, is pleased to support the publication of a second or third full-length book of poems by a Latinx poet. The series is edited by Francisco Aragón.

Crooked Hearts Press
Crooked Hearts Press is an imprint of Red Hen books. Using W. H. Auden’s admonition that “You shall love your crooked neighbor / With your crooked heart,” our goal is to publish unusual, passionate, and, yes, crooked voices. Our focus is women writers over fifty-five.
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02 Literary Events: Over 30 readings held annually, at a variety of venues in the Greater Los Angeles Area and New York City, featuring both acclaimed and emerging writers from throughout the world.

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