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FOR SUBMISSION INQUIRIES, CONTACT:
COURTNEY OCHSNER
Acquisitions Editor
cochsner2@unl.edu

nebraskapress.unl.edu

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Cover image: Photo by Chris Jarvis on Unsplash
TO HELL WITH IT
Of Sin and Sex, Chicken Wings, and Dante’s Entirely Ridiculous, Needlessly Guilt-Inducing Inferno
DINTY W. MOORE

Dinty W. Moore started questioning the world of religion at a young age, quizzing—and often stumping—the nuns in his Catholic school, and has been questioning it ever since. Yet after years of Catholic school, religious guilt, and persistent cultural conditioning, Moore still can’t shake the feelings of inadequacy, and asks: What would the world be like if eternal damnation was not hanging constantly over our sheepish heads? Why do we persist in believing a myth that merely makes us miserable? In To Hell with It, Moore intersects narratives of his everyday life, reflections on his childhood, the world of religion, and its influence on contemporary culture and society.

“\textquote{A madcap, deep, hopeful, absurd, learned, solemn, silly, and somehow redeeming look at the hell we make for ourselves, the hell the world offers, and the heaven to be found if only we look in the heart of each of our hearts, plus cartoons!}”—Bill Roorbach, author of Life among Giants

“I don’t dare say that Dinty’s Inferno is better than Dante’s. But it is a hell of a lot funnier. It’s so funny that you don’t realize how smart it is until it’s too late: you’ve suffered Deep Thoughts. You realize you’ve been not only entertained but enlightened. Okay, okay, to hell with it: Dinty’s is better.”—Beth Ann Fennelly, author of Heating and Cooling

2021 • 180 pp. • 5 ½ x 8 ½ • 31 illustrations, index
$19.95 • paperback • 978-1-4962-2460-6

AMERICAN LIVES
TOBIAS WOLFF, SERIES EDITOR
ANYTHING WILL BE EASY AFTER THIS
A Western Identity Crisis
BETHANY MAILE

After dropping out of college in Boston, Bethany Maile flies home to Idaho, intent on exploring the mythic Wild West wonderland she (mis)remembers. She trails rodeo queens, bids on cattle, shoots guns, and searches for wild horses. Maile recounts her evolution from a girl willingly suckered by a busted-down tale to a more knowing woman who discovers a new narrative that enchants without deluding.

“Blending personal insight with sharp-eyed cultural analysis, the author celebrates the West and Western identity without ever losing sight of the myriad complexities that underlie both. An eloquent and perceptive memoir in essays.”—Kirkus Reviews

“Anything Will Be Easy after This pairs old school journalistic immersion with formal ingenuity and weds Maile’s healthy skepticism to her legit enthusiastic love for the West’s stories. Half excellent memoir and half blade-sharp cultural critique, this terrific book made me a convert to the complicated appeal of the state.”—Ander Monson, author of Vanishing Point: Not a Memoir

“Gorgeously written, vividly imagined, and poignantly observed, Maile’s open-eyed essays are a heartbroken love song to Idaho: what it was, what it never was, what it is, what it might yet be. Whether she is contemplating motherhood or mustangs or Ray LaMontagne, rodeo queens or Dairy Queen, True Grit, or the gut-wrenching shame of genocide, Maile is a brilliant new voice in and of the West.”—Kim Barnes, author of In the Wilderness: Coming of Age in Unknown Country

2020 • 234 pp. • 6 x 9
$19.95 • paperback • 978-1-4962-2021-9
SKY SONGS
Meditations on Loving a Broken World
JENNIFER SINOR

Sky Songs is a collection of essays that takes inspiration from the ancient seabed in which Jennifer Sinor lives, an elemental landscape that reminds her that our lives are shaped by all that has passed through. Sinor offers a lyric exploration of language, love, and the promise inherent in the stories we tell: to remember. Writing as a mother, teacher, and yoga instructor, Sinor meditates on how to live in a broken world, one full of suffering and grace.

“Sinor’s skills in interweaving different stories within the essays and finding the hidden connections between them are evident throughout. Together, they work to create a tapestry that is both searching and insightful. A lyrically profound collection.”
—Kirkus Reviews

“I moved into these essays, folded myself between Sinor’s patient, pointed, perfect pages, and was fully embraced by Sinor’s attention, her expansiveness, and her enveloping words.”—Nicole Walker, author of Sustainability: A Love Story

“The timing couldn’t be better for Jennifer Sinor’s Sky Songs. In this era of dissent and polarization, her essays take us right to the edge of what is most beautifully, troublingly, and excitingly human. The fragility of the body, the perseverance of the soul: we’re willing to dive deep into these essays about love, fear, family, and the healing power of solitude because we’re in Sinor’s steady hands. I’m grateful for her fierce honesty and her wise insights.”—Debra Gwartney, author of I Am a Stranger Here Myself

2020 • 216 pp. • 5 ½ x 8 ½
$19.95 • paperback • 978-1-4962-2264-0
WHAT BECOMES YOU
New Edition
AARON RAZ LINK AND HILDA RAZ

Turning from female to male and from teaching scientist to theatre performer, Aaron Raz Link documents the extraordinary medical, social, legal, and personal process involved in a complete identity change. Hilda Raz, a well-known feminist writer and teacher, observes the process as both an “astonished” parent and as a professor who has studied gender issues. All these perspectives come into play in this collaborative memoir, which travels between women’s experience and men’s lives, explores the art and science of changing sex, maps uncharted family values, and journeys through a world transformed by surgery, hormones, love, and clown school. This edition includes new discussion questions.

“The deepest pleasure of memoir is that it can teach us to see truths through eyes other than our own, and What Becomes You accomplishes exactly that.”—Gayle Salamon, Great Plains Quarterly

“Aaron Raz Link’s story is a vital contribution to the oeuvre of transgender literature. . . . It is careful and tender while simultaneously confrontational and challenging.”—Julie R. Enszer, Lambda Book Report

“This deeply personal collaborative memoir details the multiple layers of the journey Child and Mom take on the road to Sarah becoming Aaron. This book can’t help but challenge the readers to rethink what they know about gender, sex, family relationships, and themselves. A compelling narrative, this is the best book I’ve read this year.”—OutSmart

2021 • 324 pp. • 6 x 9
$21.95 • paperback • 978-1-4962-2784-3
SUE WILLIAM SILVERMAN

In these thematically linked pieces, Sue William Silverman explores the fear of death, and her desire to survive it, through gallows humor, realism, and speculation. Although defeating death is physically impossible, language, commemoration, and metaphor can offer slivers of transcendent immortality.

“Because of the distinctive subject matter and Silverman’s vast writing talents, How to Survive Death and Other Inconveniences will appeal to new and experienced readers alike; notably: it will also draw teachers of creative writing, who will cherish it for the many essays that can be taught as models of braided and segmented forms.”—Jody Keisner, Hippocampus Magazine

“A joyously unconventional memoir written at least in part as a hedge against mortality. It will shake loose memories, invite you to ponder, and, maybe best of all, make you laugh. This is a marvelously written, imaginative, and seriously funny book.”—Abigail Thomas, New York Times best-selling author of What Comes Next and How to Like It

2020 • 222 pp. • 5 ½ x 8 ½
$19.95 • paperback • 978-1-4962-1409-6

ROBIN HEMLEY

What does it mean to be a citizen of the world in the twenty-first century? Robin Hemley wrestles with this question in Borderline Citizen as he takes the reader on a singular journey through the hinterlands of national identity.

“Borderline Citizen makes not only for interesting historical reading, but an absorbing vantage on our contemporary crises of belonging.”—Justin Tyler Clark, Los Angeles Review of Books

“Hemley is a delightful guide, but there are serious questions for him to explore here as well—and lessons for all the mainlands and mother countries about the meaning and price of national identity. Quite possibly the most original travel book published in years.”—Jeff Sharlet, author of The Family

“Hemley takes us to some of history’s oddest bits of territory, showing how human lives are shaped (and often distorted) by arbitrary political boundaries. With superb storytelling, he explores the meanings of nationalism, sovereignty, citizenship, and the loyalties of the human heart.”—Corey Flintoff, former NPR foreign correspondent

2020 • 216 pp. • 5 ½ x 8 ½ • 3 photographs, 3 maps
$21.95 • paperback • 978-1-4962-2041-7
THE DISTANCE BETWEEN
A Memoir
TIMOTHY J. HILLEGONDS

The Distance Between is a nuanced exploration of and reckoning with absent fathers, fatherhood, addiction, adolescent rage, white male privilege, and the author’s own toxic masculinity.

“If more men were capable of this kind of humility and vulnerability, who knows what changes we might see in our definitions of masculinity?”—Ryan Smernoff, Los Angeles Review of Books

“With earnest, unflinching prose and piercing detail, Hillegonds chronicles a turbulent past defined by a toxic mixture of rage, recklessness, and addiction. His willingness to peel back the layers of vulnerability and shame to reveal the man he once was is a stirring testament to the man he is now.”—Melanie Brooks, author of Writing Hard Stories

“A bracingly honest account of a boy’s search for manhood through the wilds of addiction, violence, and early fatherhood. This story gutted me. Hillegonds’s debut announces that he’s a writer to watch.”—Hope Edelman, author of Motherless Daughters: The Legacy of Loss

2019 • 280 pp. • 5 ½ x 8 ½
$20.00 • paperback • 978-1-4962-1668-7

MEANDER BELT
Family, Loss, and Coming of Age in the Working-Class South
M. RANDAL O’WAIN

Meander Belt is a reflection on how a working-class boy from the American South came to fall in love with language and writing despite his relationship with a father who valued physical rather than mental labor.

“O’Wain deftly parses the larger cultural forces that shaped his youth—the heavy thumb that is family, class, place, and tradition. The result is something that straddles the line between the intimacy and immediacy of someone simply telling their story, and the perspicacity of the best cultural criticism. It’s a tender, funny book with a clear vision and a true heart.”—Juliet Escoria, Electric Literature

“A book about the inevitable heartbreak suffered between a father and son when the son is ready to become a man and the father is not ready to let him go. In the end, Meander Belt is a revelation. M. Randal O’Wain is signaling his presence to the pantheon of great North Carolina writers.”—Jason Jefferies, WRAL.com

2019 • 216 pp. • 5 ½ x 8 ½
$19.95 • paperback • 978-1-4962-1331-0
THE VIRGIN OF PRINCE STREET
Expeditions into Devotion
SONJA LIVINGSTON

• 2019 Foreword INDIES Award, Gold for Essay

The Virgin of Prince Street chronicles Sonja Livingston’s quest to explore devotion and spirituality in her life. Meditations on quirky rituals and fading traditions thoughtfully and dynamically interrogate traditional elements of sacramental devotion, especially as they relate to shifting concepts of religion, relationships, and the sacred.

“The essayist discovers that devotion in imperfect circumstances is, in fact, the only devotion ever possible and has the extraordinary capacity to transform the human heart. Livingston’s essays illuminate while infusing nuance and generosity into an increasingly polarized religious landscape.”—Richard Rohr, author of Falling Upward

“Livingston’s essays are light-hearted, witty, told in a comforting, sisterly voice, someone you can trust, someone who speaks her mind, someone who explores those things lost and found.”—Debbie Hagan, Brevity

“If you think a woman’s quest to find a statue from the church of her childhood wouldn’t be that engaging a mystery, you’d be wrong. . . . Sonja Livingston refuses simple devotion as a motive and keeps digging for the source of religious impulse.”—Elizabeth Jarrett Andrew, Bookends Review

2019 • 184 pp. • 5 ½ x 8 ½
$17.95 • paperback • 978-1-4962-1717-2

THIS FISH IS FOWL
Essays of Being
XU XI

In This Fish Is Fowl Xu Xi offers the transnational and feminist perspective of a contemporary “glocalized” American life, one with many Asian characteristics.

“A whirlwind, wise introduction to the complicated joys of multiculturalism, This Fish Is Fowl is intensely personal yet fully engaged with the world, celebrating our differences as well as our shared universal experiences.”—Foreword Reviews, starred

“Broad-ranging, introspective, and honest essays that reveal a fine writer’s experiences, mind, and heart.”—Kirkus Reviews

“Throughout these broad-ranging and honest essays, Xi wonders about humanity and the future of our world. She explores her cultural and family identity as well as past experiences. . . . Xi reminds us of the true meanings of identity and belonging, while celebrating all our differences.”—Anita Nham, Hippocampus Magazine

“Part breezy, leaping memoir, part social commentary, this book adds a crucial chapter to the old story of national identity.”—Susanne Antonetta, author of Make Me a Mother

2019 • 320 pp. • 6 x 9 • 11 photographs
$19.95 • paperback • 978-1-4962-0682-4
GOOD NEIGHBORS, BAD TIMES REVISITED

New Echoes of My Father’s German Village

MIMI SCHWARTZ

Ten years after the publication of Mimi Schwartz’s memoir about Christian and Jewish neighbors in the tiny German village where her father was born, Schwartz receives a fan letter from South Australia. The man, Max Sayer, had grown up Catholic in this village during the Third Reich, and his family moved into an abandoned Jewish house in 1937, five houses away from where Schwartz’s father’s family lived for generations before fleeing Hitler for America that same year. So the families had never met. Sayer, it turns out, had written an unpublished memoir about his village boyhood during the Hitler years, and it greatly deepened Schwartz’s perspective on the village history they share. In Good Neighbors, Bad Times Revisited, the two memoirs talk to each other. Weaving excerpts from Sayer’s memoir and a yearlong correspondence with the whole family, Schwartz enlarges our understanding of neighbors under pressure to hate. Given the rise of xenophobia, white supremacy, and anti-Semitism, this exploration of decency and demonization seems even more urgent today.

“In this new edition Mimi Schwartz brings us back to her father’s ancestral village of Rexingen in the German Black Forest to show us that, generations later, it still has much to teach us about decency then and now.”
—Frank Mecklenburg, director of research and chief archivist of the Leo Baeck Institute

“Mimi Schwartz reminds us how close we are (in time, in danger, in sentiment) to the horrific past, but that, even then, individual stories from everyday people show us grace and goodness and generosity despite the suffering.”
—Patrick Madden, author of Disparates

2021 • 318 pp. • 5 ½ x 8 ½ • 25 photographs, 2 illustrations
$24.95 • paperback • 978-1-4962-2120-9
BAD TOURIST
Misadventures in Love and Travel
SUZANNE ROBERTS

Both a memoir in travel essays and an anti-guidebook, Bad Tourist takes us across four continents to fifteen countries, showing us what not to do when traveling. A woman learning to claim her own desires and adventures, Suzanne Roberts encounters lightning and landslides, sharks and piranha-infested waters, a nightclub drugging, burning bodies, and brief affairs as she searches for the love of her life and finally herself. Fearlessly confessional, shamelessly funny, and wholly unapologetic, Roberts offers a refreshingly honest account of the joys and absurdities of confronting new landscapes and cultures, as well as new versions of herself.

“I love travel, armchair and otherwise, so I knew it would be a pleasure letting Suzanne Roberts take me around the world on a shoestring, from India’s Grand Elephant Festival, to the steppes of Mongolia on the trail of Genghis Khan, to the cool tiles of another one-star bathroom wondering if this would be the time she’d puke herself to death. Even more satisfying are her honesty, courage, and eventual clarity as she tackles her own understories—family dysfunction and alcoholism, internalized misogyny, and what the climate catastrophe means for the travel addicted among us—combining these essays into a thoroughly relatable journey of the heart.”—Pam Houston, author of Deep Creek: Finding Hope in the High Country

“If Michel de Montaigne and Chelsea Handler could get together in a bar in some far-flung part of the world and get good and drunk, they might dream up a book like this. This is not your parents’ travel writing! If you’re thirsting for a literary triple shot of sex, booze, and misadventures, Bad Tourist is your passport to a trip you won’t want to come home from.”—Michael P. Branch, author of Rants from the Hill

2020 • 280 pp. • 5 ½ x 8 ½
$19.95 • paperback • 978-1-4962-2284-8
MIDWESTERN STRANGE
Hunting Monsters, Martians, and the Weird in Flyover Country
B.J. HOLLARS

B.J. Hollars explores the mythic Midwest—from bipedal wolf sightings to run-ins with pancake-flipping aliens, among other oddities—not to confirm or debunk the mysteries of flyover country but to understand how they complicate our worldview in our “post-truth” era.

“A mixture of folklore and travelogue, with a touch of memoir. Ultimately, it’s the story of a curious mind, hoping to be amazed.” —Susan Neville, Indiana Magazine of History

“Hollars meets some fascinating people in this quirky account that contends with the ways such oddities retain cultural footholds.” —Marjie Ducey, Omaha World-Herald

“Highly recommended for its perspective (as we say in the Midwest, “it’s different”), but also for its satisfying prose. Hollars is a beautiful writer who entranced me with deftness of style from the formal to the unceremonious.” —Adrian Koesters, Split Rock Review

2019 • 224 pp. • 5 1/2 x 8 1/2 • 15 photographs, 1 illustration

$19.95 • paperback • 978-1-4962-1560-4

NEW IN PAPERBACK

BURY MY HEART AT CHUCK E. CHEESE’S
TIFFANY MIDGE
FOREWORD BY GEARY HOBSON

Bury My Heart at Chuck E. Cheese’s is a powerful and inviting collection of Tiffany Midge’s musings on life, politics, and identity as a Native woman in America.

“Midge is a wry, astute charmer with an eye for detail and an ear for the scruffy rhythms of American lingo.” —Sarah Vowell, author of Lafayette in the Somewhat United States

“[A] cornucopia of literary brilliance. . . . Every entry is so well-crafted that the only disappointment you’ll find is when you realize you’ve read them all.” —Ryan Winn, Tribal College Journal of American Indian Higher Education

“Bury My Heart at Chuck E. Cheese’s drives a spear into the stereotype of Native American stoicism. It is perhaps the funniest nonfiction collection I have ever read. But it is much more than funny: it is moving, honest, and painful as well, and looks at the absurdities of modern America.” —David Treuer, author of The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee

2021 • 216 pp. • 5 1/2 x 8 1/2

$19.95 • paperback • 978-1-4962-2493-4
BODIES BUILT FOR GAME
The Prairie Schooner Anthology of Contemporary Sports Writing
EDITED BY NATALIE DIAZ
HANNAH ENSOR, ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Bodies Built for Game brings together poems, essays, and stories that challenge our traditional ideas of sport and question the power structures that athletics enforce. What is it that drives us to athletics? What is it that makes us break our own bodies or the bodies of others as we root for these unnatural and performed victories? With contributions from Hanif Abdurraqib, Fatimah Asghar, Reginald Dwayne Betts, Louise Erdrich, Toni Jensen, Ada Limón, Tommy Orange, Claudia Rankine, Danez Smith, and Maya Washington, among others, this book challenges America by questioning its games.

“[A] valuable collection of critical commentary on salient issues pertaining to identity and power structures. . . . As a celebrated poet and essayist as well as former professional female athlete in the American sports industry, Diaz (Mojave), is an excellent authority on these themes.”—Tara Keegan, American Indian Quarterly

2019 • 402 pp. • 6 x 9
$26.95 • paperback • 978-1-4962-1773-8

OUT OF THE CRAZYWOODS
CHERYL SAVAGEAU

Out of the Crazywoods is the insightful and riveting story of Abenaki poet Cheryl Savageau’s late-life diagnosis of bipolar disorder and personal journey toward the acceptance and management of this lifelong illness.

“Savageau’s luminous prose ripples, soars, and shines with grounded honesty, some biting humor, and richly textured sensory detail (some quite synesthetic). This is a compelling work of complex embodiment, complicated relations (with self and other), and careful narrative. It demonstrates how one writes identity and, too, how identity can be (well) written.”—Brenda Jo Brueggemann, editor of Disability Studies Quarterly

“‘Abenaki poet and memoirist Cheryl Savageau’s stunning collection of braided vignettes leads us through the chaos many of us know, toward tenuous, hard-won places of compassion, joy, and possibility.’—Deborah A. Miranda, author of Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir

“Out of the Crazywoods is a hopeful book. Prior versions of yourself may shatter, but you are not shattered.”—Bruce Owens Grimm, Brevity

2020 • 264 pp. • 6 x 9
$29.95 • hardcover • 978-1-4962-1903-9
CELESTE HOLM SYNDROME
On Character Actors from Hollywood’s Golden Age
DAVID LAZAR

Celeste Holm Syndrome is David Lazar’s homage to character actors, both the famous and the lesser known, from Hollywood’s Golden Age. In this series of personal and critical essays, Lazar’s prose shines with clarity and directness through his meditations on the nature of acting, the cultural pull and reach that actors embodying characters over time, have on our culture, and on the writer personally.

“Fans of Hollywood’s Golden Age will delight in this affecting look at what makes actors truly memorable, even if they’re not in the spotlight.” —Publishers Weekly

“A great book about character actors would be enough, but Lazar’s imaginative and ingratiatingly erudite series of meditations is much more. The author spins sprightly essays from each subject, allowing biography and personal speculation to reinforce and enrich each other. The sublime tribute to Oscar Levant and melancholia is, as they say, worth the price of admission.” —Molly Haskell, author of From Reverence to Rape: The Treatment of Women in the Movies

“Celeste Holm Syndrome reminds us that even the quietest presence or briefest screen time from these supporting players with a seemingly tireless work ethic and deep well of modest humility can leave a lasting impression.” —Christopher John Stephens, Pop Matters

2020 • 168 pp. • 5 x 8 • 22 photographs
$19.95 • paperback • 978-1-4962-0045-7
DELUSIONS OF GRANDEUR
American Essays
JOEY FRANKLIN

In Delusions of Grandeur Joey Franklin examines the dreams and delusions of America’s most corrosive mythologies—white supremacy and rugged individualism, toxic masculinity and religious extremism—as they reveal themselves in the life of a husband and father fast approaching forty. With prose steeped in research and a playful attention to language, Franklin asks candid questions about what it takes to see clearly as a citizen, a parent, a child, a neighbor, and a human being.

“Franklin writes like a novelist, reasons like a theologian, and reminds us that getting it right, in both language and life, is all that matters in the end.”—Dennis Covington, author of Salvation on Sand Mountain

“With candor, modesty, and a leavening of humor, he ponders sexual shame, dysfunctional families, class divisions, apocalyptic religion, and other difficult issues, inviting the reader to join him in the search for understanding.”—Scott Russell Sanders, author of The Way of Imagination

“I’m a serious admirer of Joey Franklin’s work, and this book gathers some of his very best and most culturally and politically relevant, nuanced, balanced, and penetrating essays—which, properly and widely read, might actually deepen and widen the conversation, at least a little.”—David Shields, author of The Trouble with Men: Reflections on Sex, Love, Marriage, Porn, and Power

2020 • 222 pp. • 5 ½ x 8 ½ • 1 illustration
$19.95 • paperback • 978-1-4962-1210-8
GET THEE TO A BAKERY

Essays

RICK BAILEY

In Get Thee to a Bakery, Rick Bailey returns to familiar subjects—home, family, food, health, travel, and technology—finding humor in the details of everyday life. Whose idea was pumpkin pie? How do you get rid of an earworm? Why do Americans smile so much? Is that a velociraptor’s footprint? Are we in the midst of a great bug die-off? Part memoir, part travelogue, Bailey entertains his reader with the challenges and delights of travel and multicultural living.

“Rick Bailey has a deft comic touch. He can make even a flooding basement or a power outage fascinating and hilarious. The world is a more interesting and far funnier place when seen through his eyes.”—Sharon Harrigan, author of Half

“Rick Bailey writes with a rare blend of intelligence and whimsy. Few essayists convey such joy in being alive. Bailey’s prose is sharp and the essays in Get Thee to a Bakery are as accessible as they are profound.”—Cal Freeman, author of Fight Songs

“Rick Bailey is an epicurean globetrotter, whisking us on a wholly satisfying culinary tour with equal measures of humor and heart. These short meditations on food, wine, music, place, and language are deliciously entertaining, a pleasure on the reading palate.”—Dorene O’Brien, author of What It Might Feel Like to Hope

2021 • 228 pp. • 5 1/2 x 8 1/2
$19.95 • paperback • 978-1-4962-2551-1
DISPARATES
Essays
PATRICK MADDEN

Patrick Madden’s unconventional essays aim to make readers laugh while considering such abstract subjects as happiness and memory, reflecting the current zeitgeist with a touch of cleverness, a dash of humor, and a little help from his friends.

“Madden’s essays offer relief—they offer laughter, provoke pondering, and delight in playfulness. . . . Disparates delights in the world and celebrates the essay. It was a joy to read.”—Natalie Johansen, Brevity

2020 • 186 pp. • 6 x 9 • 23 photographs, 25 illustrations, 5 word search puzzles
$22.95 • paperback • 978-1-4962-0244-4

APPLE, TREE
Writers on Their Parents
EDITED AND WITH AN INTRODUCTION
BY LISE FUNDERBURG

Apple, Tree features a slate of compelling essayists who eloquently consider a trait they’ve inherited from a parent. Together, these all-new essays form a prismatic meditation on how we make fresh sense of ourselves and our parents when we see the traces of them that live on in us.

“All, Tree is a sweet, smart collection, and—it has to be said—a perfect gift for a parent you love.”—Lily Meyer, NPR

2019 • 232 pp. • 6 x 9 • 2 photographs
$24.95 • hardcover • 978-1-4962-1209-2

ALL I FEEL IS RIVERS
Dervish Essays
ROBERT VIVIAN

Though spiritually akin to prose poems, Robert Vivian’s dervish essays retain an essayistic form while reflecting the dynamic movement and ancient symbolism of Turkey’s whirling dervishes with their wild lyricism, sometimes breathless cadences, and mesmerizing unspooling.

“In quick blocks of text that amount to ecstatic prose poetry or a kind of flash nonfiction, Vivian celebrates the living moment, ‘the hum and thrum and love of it.’”—New York Times Book Review

“Line by line, image by image, essay by spiraling essay, Vivian awakens us to the grace of the infinite moment: the shaft of morning light, the teaspoon of honey, the spider on the north-facing wall. All I Feel Is Rivers is a wondrous, transcendent book. Let its currents take you.”—Harrison Candelaria Fletcher, author of Presentimiento: A Life in Dreams

“This is the work of a Sufi master of rapturous prose, who dances until his feet do not touch the ground.”—David Wojahn, author of From the Valley of Making

“These essays are an exhilarating achievement.”—Barbara Hurd, author of Listening to the Savage

2020 • 126 pp. • 5 ½ x 8 ½
$19.95 • paperback • 978-1-4962-2033-2
THE LEAVE-TAKERS
A Novel
STEVEN WINGATE

Four years ago Jacob Nassedrine from Boston and Laynie Jackman from Los Angeles came within an inch of getting married before things blew apart. They never expected that fate would hurl them back together in a windblown, isolated house on the plains of South Dakota, but that’s where they end up fighting for the future of their relationship—and for their own emotional survival—amid a minefield of ghosts.

“The Leave-Takers fairly crackles with prose that strings sharp notes and breathtaking lyricism into a finely wrought tale of family struggle for survival on a hard land. . . . Steven Wingate has written a love song to the Dakota plains and every dream you ever had and lost and rebuilt again and again.” —Jonis Agee, author of The Bones of Paradise

“The novel shimmers with the regenerative possibilities of family and creativity. This is a novel about woundedness but also about the rituals that allow us to free ourselves from the past and find home and healing right where we are.” —Kent Meyers, author of The Work of Wolves

2021 • 336 pp. • 5 1/2 x 8 1/2
$24.95 • paperback • 978-1-4962-2502-3

FLYOVER FICTION
RON HANSEN, SERIES EDITOR

The books in the Flyover Fiction series are set on the Great Plains, a region located in the center of the country and referred to either sentimentally as the Heartland or dismissively as flyover country, a region more clearly defined by what it is not than by what it is. Books in this series actively engage—through plot, character, setting, or theme—with what it means to inhabit this region.
RUBY DREAMS OF JANIS JOPLIN

A Novel

MARY CLEARMAN BLEW

When Ruby joins a band and leaves her small hometown, she doesn’t expect to return—especially not bruised and disillusioned. Mary Clearman Blew deftly braids Ruby’s memories of the past with her present to explore isolation, community, abuse, and our capacity to confront the past and heal.

“Ruby Dreams demonstrates that you can go home again and that home can lead to health. But the return is harrowing.”—O. Alan Weltzien, Western American Literature

“This is a stunning narrative told in vivid detail with the insights of someone who has been there. You will not be able to put it down.”—Annick Smith, coeditor of Wide Open

“What makes the novel unforgettable is how Ruby Gervais rescues herself. . . . Only Mary Clearman Blew could have found the words, the songs, the friends, and the lost family that enable Ruby to survive and make a little dignity for herself along the way.”—David Huddle, author of The Story of a Million Years

2018 • 246 pp. • 5 ⅛ x 8 ½
$19.95 • paperback • 978-1-4962-0758-6

GLORY DAYS

MELISSA FRATERRIGO

• Named a Top Fall 2017 Indie Fiction book by Library Journal
• Named a Best Fiction Book of 2017 by Chicago Review of Books

The novel Glory Days combines gritty realism with magical elements as Melissa Fraterrigo masterfully interweaves a slate of arresting characters from a small, former farming town in Nebraska who must grapple with loss, life, and death.

“A stunning tour de force centered in a small cattle ranching town.”—Foreword starred review

“A quiet Midwestern ghost story with prose as clear and cold as the Nebraska plains in winter.”—Chicago Review of Books

“If Willa Cather and Cormac McCarthy had a love child, she would be a writer such as Fraterrigo.”—Booklist

“Astonishing writing about a world that deserves greater attention in contemporary literature.”—Library Journal, starred review

2017 • 180 pp. • 5 ⅛ x 8 ½
$19.95 • paperback • 978-1-4962-0132-4
MAHAGONY

A Novel

ÉDOUARD GLISSANT

TRANSLATED BY BETSY WING

Unlike the old mahogany tree on Martinique that centers Édouard Glissant’s rich meditation on the island’s troubled history, Martinique’s people were deprived of natural continuity—brought as slaves from Africa their forced illiteracy prevented them from creating a written record. Glissant’s geographically fixed narrators grapple with place, not only in Africa but in the wider world, where they are more closely related to the other plantation cultures of the West.

“Mahagony gives a gripping fictional embodiment of Édouard Glissant’s literary and cultural theory. It is the indispensable pivot between his abstract thought, his poetry, and his engagement with the history of the postcolonial world. Betsy Wing is Glissant’s foremost translator; she is our best guide through the mangrove of the Martinique master’s body of work.”

—A. James Arnold, professor emeritus of French at the University of Virginia

“Mahagony is a crucial monument to the ever-evolving changes defined by Édouard Glissant’s Poétique de la Relation. . . . Betsy Wing has rendered the stylistic complexities of Glissant’s writing while preserving the explosive life that emanates from every instant of this important work . . . resulting in an eminently readable text whose poetic power, charm, and subtlety has been faithfully and elegantly preserved. A magnificent accomplishment.”

—Alexandre Leupin, Phyllis M. Taylor Professor in French Studies at Louisiana State University

2021 • 186 pp. • 5 ½ x 8 ½
$19.95 • paperback • 978-1-4962-0178-2
Founded in 1997, The Backwaters Press has published award-winning books by some of America’s finest writers. The University of Nebraska Press acquired the Backwaters Press in 2018, with its impressive backlist in poetry and prose that contributes to the cultural landscape of our state and region, and continues to plant its roots firmly in the Great Plains.

The Backwaters Prize in Poetry is an international poetry book competition. One poetry manuscript is selected each year as the winner and one as an honorable mention by a committee of preliminary judges and one final judge for inclusion in this series. Cash prizes are awarded to each and the selected volumes are published by the University of Nebraska Press.

Submission guidelines for the prize series can be found online at www.nebraskapress.unl.edu/the-backwaters-press-prize-in-poetry/. For additional inquiries about the prize, please contact Emily Wendell at ewendell2@unl.edu.
THE BACKWATERS PRIZE IN POETRY WINNER
FOXLOGIC, FIREWEED
JENNIFER K. SWEENEY

Foxlogic, Fireweed follows a lyrical sequence of five physical and emotional terrains—floodplain, coast, desert, suburbia, mesa—braiding themes of nature, domesticity, isolation, and human relationships. From poems of the earth’s wild heart, its searing mysteries, its hollows, and its species, to poems of the complex domestic space, of before and after motherhood, gun terror, the election, and of dislocation and home, Jennifer K. Sweeney recovers a connectivity and wonder that seems drained from the screen-tick of daily life.

“The logic of Foxlogic, Fireweed is human and humane; it’s the logic of a penetrative tenderness and an embodiment always on the verge of dispersing into fox, or deer, or rain... These are not bandwagon poems. They don’t mug for the camera. Rather, they enact a love ‘sourced in loneliness’ where ‘with our little keys of witness’ we find each other—the very definition of the lyric poem.” —Diane Seuss

“In Jennifer K. Sweeney’s beautiful new collection, poems serve as altars for the fierce hearts and fairytales that center our lives. ... These poems recognize how sacred attention can be. In Foxlogic, Fireweed nothing escapes hiding and nothing escapes love.” —Traci Brimhall

“Foxlogic, Fireweed is a torn map of a state where all words are proximate to mystery. Venturing into terra incognita, into territory that might be anima mundi, maybe, reader, you think you know the lineaments, but they are altered. Altared. Yes, to dream space, but wider, wider—this metal into bird, stone into air, mother into vulpine. Sweeney is breathing strangeness into a small body of words, and the expanses open exponentially.” —Marsha de la O

2020 • 114 pp. • 6 x 9
$15.95 • paperback • 978-1-4962-2269-5
THE BACKWATERS PRIZE
IN POETRY, HONORABLE MENTION
EVERYBODY’S JONESIN’ FOR SOMETHING
INDIGO MOOR

Indigo Moor turns an unflinching spotlight on the American Dream. From the murder of Emmett Till to the fall of the Twin Towers, Moor weaves together the hopes, sacrifices, and Sisyphean yearnings that make this country the beautiful trap that it is. Everybody’s Jonesin’ for Something takes an imagistic leap through the darker side of our search for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, perusing what we lose, what we leave behind, and what strange beauty we uncover.

“Indigo Moor’s new collection shuttles between searing rebuke and hopeful anguish with accents of hard-edged humor. What I love most is the clarity of thought—the no-holds-barred, no-punches-pulled sharpness of the language that carries the reader through each poem, jonesin’ for the next. Everybody’s Jonesin’ for Something invites you out of your complacency and fuels a restlessness that reminds you that you’re alive, that this is no time for sleeping.”—Tim Seibles, author of One Turn around the Sun

“An extraordinary and penetrating look at the world through the eyes of an electrifying writer who is indeed jonesin’ for something; perhaps the answer to who we are as Americans, or even who we are as human beings. There’s joy in experiencing a work like this one. Each page entralls as Indigo Moor explores a myriad of topics in a keenly aware, yet compassionate voice filled with stirring language, powerful observations, and intense wonder.”—Carol Lynn Stevenson Grellas, author of Epitaph for the Beloved

2021 • 114 pp. • 6 x 9
$15.95 • paperback • 978-1-4962-2270-1
UNHOLY HEART
New and Selected Poems
GRACE BAUER

Unholy Heart is a collection of Grace Bauer’s best selected and new poems, marking her twenty-five years as an award-winning poet. Well known for the wide range of both her subject matter and poetic styles, Bauer’s mostly elegiac new work is simultaneously plainspoken and complex, emotionally riveting, and imbued with wry wit.

“Grace Bauer is a first-rate narrative metaphysician, telling stories as ideas and ideas as stories. . . . A keen inventiveness lights up every poem in this new and selected collection, in which the beautifully, uniquely observed detail exists not for its own sake but as one more clue leading us toward unsettling discoveries.” —Dorothy Barresi, author of What We Did While We Made More Guns

“With masterful use of ekphrastic poetry, persona poems, narrative poems, formal poems, and free verse, Grace Bauer’s body of work, presented beautifully and generously in this volume, is a welcome and important addition to the poetry of the Midwest, and to the poetry of America.” —Kwame Dawes, author of Nebraska: Poems

“In Unholy Heart we witness the unfolding of a life, a voice, and a spirit, often as the speaker inhabits other voices, from the biblical Marys to Marilyn Monroe, via iconic visual artists and their art, and via a range of landscapes, of homes seen anew. ‘What I once called home / today seems strange,’ Bauer writes as the biblical Ruth, and it is that perception and re-perception, and an intensifying openness to mystery and interior journeying, that characterizes this collection.” —Diane Seuss, author of Still Life with Two Dead Peacocks and a Girl

2021 • 192 pp. • 6 x 9
$19.95 • paperback • 978-1-4962-2594-8
THE RINEHART FRAMES
CHESWAYO MPHANZA
FOREWORD BY KWAME DAWES

Winner of the Sillerman First Book Prize for African Poetry, The Rinehart Frames questions the boundaries of diaspora and narrative through a tethering of voices and forms that infringe upon monolithic categorizations of Blackness and what can be intersected with it. The poems are riffs, extensions of an ongoing history, figures, and ultimately are their own labyrinths, which continue the conversations of the infinite possibilities of the imagination to dabble in, with, and out of history.

“The Rinehart Frames is a brilliant and formally accomplished reworking of the cento in a collection that conjures the elegance of geometric theorems, while simultaneously revealing a capacious knowledge of, and deep engagement with, art, politics, Afrosporic issues, and the difficult condition of being human. . . . More than ever now, we need work such as this and, with ‘a craft wielded and willed,’ Mphanza is more than up to this difficult task.”—M. NourbeSe Philip, author of Zong!

“The inventiveness and elegance with which The Rinehart Frames weaves the imaginations of visual art, film, and literature in order to observe and absorb the experience of Blackness in the troubled past and unsettling present is nothing short of extraordinary.”—Rigoberto González, author of Unpeopled Eden

“Whether guiding us through frames of film, sharpening the focus on paintings framed on display, illuminating the framing of political pain, or framing the beauty of silence, there’s music throughout.”—A. Van Jordan, author of The Cineaste

2021 • 126 pp. • 6 x 9
$19.95 • paperback • 978-1-4962-2576-4
YOUR CRIB, MY QIBLA
SADDIQ DZUKOGI

Your Crib, My Qibla interrogates loss, the death of a child, and a father’s pursuit of language able to articulate grief. In these poems, the language of memory functions as a space of mourning, connecting the dead with the world of the living.

“In Saddiq Dzukogi’s Your Crib, My Qibla the loss of his daughter becomes the navigational pull to an interiority steeped in earthly grief and a desire for the unseen spaces of the afterlife. With incredible fidelity Dzukogi unravels a series of poems that wrestle with his loss and make meaning of our most unbearable moments. His is a song of embodied witness and recollection shaped by a voice skilled in the musicality of duality. These are poems that find their way to the reader’s depth and open a window to the otherworld.”—Matthew Shenoda, author of Tahrir Suite

“A love song, an elegy, a book-long sequence, Your Crib, My Qibla is a parent’s epistles to a deceased child, an exploration of pain that continues to sing through pain. The mourning here is endless and yet transformative.”—Ilya Kaminsky, author of Deaf Republic and Dancing in Odessa

“Your Crib, My Qibla signals the arrival of a poet of assured craft, of courageous sentiment, and one who possesses a capacious facility with language and musicality. In this collection Saddiq Dzukogi offers an elegy to innocence and to the false security of the living, and yet he demonstrates that the art of lamentation is as forceful an expression of hope as we have available to us. This is a remarkable introduction to a poet for our moment and time.”—Kwame Dawes author of Nebraska: Poems

2021 • 108 pp. • 6 x 9
$17.95 • paperback • 978-1-4962-2577-1
EXODUS
‘GBENGA ADEOBA
FOREWORD BY KWAME DAWES
Winner of the Sillerman First Book Prize for African Poetry, the collection Exodus explores themes of migration—both forced and free—and of memory, transition, and the intersections between the imagined and the historic.

“There is both passion and beauty in Adeoba’s work, framed by what seems an acute sense of the power of language to capture reality. To capture and reveal truth, shrouded in all its scars, alive somehow with hope. History demands that images of drowning surge through Adeoba’s Exodus. The Mediterranean is ‘a grave wide enough for the numbers,’ we too ‘could become a band of unnamed migrants / found floating on the face of the sea,’ and ‘you could find trinket boxes or a girl’s / plastic doll in that rubble. . . . / The tiny things are heavier.’ Yet the poet can still imagine shorebirds’ songs ‘urging men to love again, calling / them to images craving tenderness.’ For poetry too is a tiny thing, and a heavy one.” —Alicia Ostriker, New York state poet laureate

2020 • 78 pp. • 6 x 9
$17.95 • paperback • 978-1-4962-2117-9

SACRAMENT OF BODIES
ROMEO ORIOGUN
In the poetry collection Sacrament of Bodies, Romeo Oriogun examines queerness in Nigerian society, masculinity, and the place of memory in grief and survival.

“In African poetry, where queer poetry still appears on the margins, Sacrament of Bodies harnesses the expression and truth that appeals to those of us who feel the need to shout and have raw conversations about the rights of queer people.” —Tikondwe Kaphagawani Chimkowola, Africa in Words

“Oriogun’s tension between the high style of a sermon and the earthiness of love songs gives these poems a particularly memorable touch. . . . But it is his music that finally sways me, it’s music that lifts it all, that makes out of truth-telling a song. The music works here because Oriogun is a master of incantation: ‘I danced,’ he tells us, ‘as if I knew every song had a door.’ Indeed. I love this beautiful, heart-wrenching, passionate book.” —Ilya Kaminsky, author of Deaf Republic

“Romeo Oriogun has wrought complex, elegant poems that wrench beauty from all that would kill us. As he writes, ‘I worship the day because it survived the night.’ I admire these poems immensely. They make me stronger.” —Ellen Bass, author of Indigo and Like a Beggar

2020 • 78 pp. • 6 x 9
$17.95 • paperback • 978-1-4962-1964-0
‘MAMASEKO
THABILE MAKUE

Named after the poet’s mother, ‘mamaseko is a collection of introspective lyrics and other poems dealing with the intersections of blood relationships and related identities. Thabile Makue questions what it means to be beings of blood—to relate by blood, to live by blood. In her poems Makue looks for traces of shared trauma and pain and asserts that wounds of the blood are healed by the same.

“The author’s focus on blood as both the root and the salve for violence is an ingenious metaphor employed throughout the book under numerous guises.”—Veronica Schorr, New York Journal of Books

2020 • 144 pp. • 6 x 9
$17.95 • paperback • 978-1-4962-1960-2

MODERN SUDANESE POETRY

An Anthology
TRANSLATED AND EDITED BY
ADIL BABIKIR
FOREWORD BY MATTHEW SHENODA

Spanning more than six decades of Sudan’s postindependence history, this collection features poetry by some of Sudan’s most renowned poets.

“This is an unprecedented accomplishment not only in translation of modern Sudanese poetry but also scholarship on its history, evolution, poetics, and aesthetics. . . . This book is a great addition to the library of Arab poetry in translation that should appeal to scholars and the general public with interest in Arabic poetry.”—Salah M. Hassan, Goldwin Smith Professor of Africana Studies and History of Art and Visual Studies at Cornell University

2019 • 6 x 9
$19.95 • paperback • 978-1-4962-1563-5

YOUR BODY IS WAR
MAHTEM SHIFERRAW

Your Body Is War contemplates the psychology of the female human body, looking at the ways it exists and moves in the world, refusing to be contained in the face of grief and trauma.

“Elegant and heart-wrenching, these poems possess a powerful voice that travels across oceans to reconnect with the language and stories of Ethiopia, Mahtem Shiferraw’s homeland. Your Body Is War speaks poignantly about the inherited historical traumas, the ache and beauty of memory, and the strength it takes to endure the wounds of a nation, of a family, of a conflicted self.”—Rigoberto González, author of What Drowns the Flowers in Your Mouth

2019 • 6 x 9
$17.95 • paperback • 978-1-4962-1413-3

THE CARELESS SEAMSTRESS
TJAWANGWA DEMA
FOREWORD BY KWAME DAWES

Winner of the Sillerman First Book Prize for African Poets, The Careless Seamstress weaves its trope of sewing to unify a collection that is otherwise deliberate in entering new spaces of inquiry.

“Tjawangwa Dema’s poems are as bold, roving, and insistent as they are delicate and incisive. The Careless Seamstress is a ravishing debut.”—Tracy K. Smith, U.S. poet laureate and author of Wade in the Water: Poems

2019 • 6 x 9
$17.95 • paperback • 978-1-4962-1412-6
CARRYING WATER TO THE FIELD
New and Selected Poems
JOYCE SUTPHEN
INTRODUCTION BY TED KOOSER

Carrying Water to the Field evokes the author’s deeply personal view of life on a small farm, her coming of age in the late 1960s, and her search for balance in a very modern world. The collection includes forty new poems on the themes of luck, hard work, and the ravages of time.

“The writing in Carrying Water to the Field is faultless. . . . And even more satisfying is the fact that this brilliant technique justifies and is justified by the truth value of these poems, which usher us into the reality of time, change, loss, and memory’s belated and beautiful insights.”—Vijay Seshadri, Pulitzer Prize–winning author of Three Sections: Poems

“[Joyce Sutphen] shows us the very heart and soul of her working, rooted prairie people, as shy of being caught in a poem as they once were reluctant to be photographed, but perfectly captured for us in this sweeping account of life that is both specific and universal.”—Anne-Marie Fyfe, author of The House of Small Absences

2019 • 240 pp. • 6 x 9
$19.95 • paperback • 978-1-4962-1636-6

REGULAR HAUNTS
New and Previous Poems
GERALD COSTANZO
INTRODUCTION BY TED KOOSER

Long known as one of the best contemporary poets of satire, Gerald Costanzo focuses specifically on American themes that, though presented as parables, fables, jokes, and put-ons, remain darkly serious in tone.

“This is truly poetry in the American grain. Costanzo looks unflinchingly at our totems, artifacts, and folkways and sets them down just as they are, with a deadly but affectionate irony.”—Carolyn Kizer

“Costanzo is a grief-ridden observer of the kulchur. He reminds us of what we had, what we lost, perhaps what we never knew—and he does it in a mature, wise, lovely cadence.”—Gerald Stern

“Costanzo’s wit and satire and vision of the grotesque world of America get to the center of much of the madness of our culture.”—Peter Balakian

2018 • 156 pp. • 6 x 9
$19.95 • paperback • 978-1-4962-0586-5
LETTER FROM A PLACE I’VE NEVER BEEN
New and Collected Poems, 1986–2020
HILDA RAZ
EDITED BY KWAME DAWES
INTRODUCTION BY JOHN KINSELLA
Hilda Raz has spent a lifetime with books, loving them, writing them, teaching and editing them. Letter from a Place I’ve Never Been shows the evolution of an American poet whose many collections reveal a writer of immense power and relevance. Including more than twenty new poems, the collection showcases an influential American poet’s work over the past three and a half decades.

“To read this book is to open a precious gift, to sit down to a feast celebrating a life in poetry. If you’ve read Raz’s earlier work, the poems will be old friends, made new by seeing them in this expansive context. If you have not, you have a journey ahead worth any price, let alone the price of a book. Raz’s poems deal with grief, longing, and loss in all their complicated forms but interwoven with transformations that take your breath away.”—Jesse Lee Kercheval, author of America that island off the coast of France

“Readers track Raz’s imaginative language across the decades, as she mourns and meditates, catalogs and investigates. Resisting the cultural and technological policing of women’s bodies, the poet evokes illness, recovery, sorrow, and delight. These narrators—gritty, world-loving, tenacious—bind the personal and political in unforgettable family and diasporic narratives.”—Robin Becker, author of The Black Bear Inside Me

2021 • 464 pp. • 6 x 9
$29.95 • paperback • 978-1-4962-2682-2
TRANS
Poems
HILDA RAZ

Trans grew out of Hilda Raz’s experience with her son’s journey to a transgender identity. The collection of poems moves between past and present, allowing Raz to reflect on her own childhood and on her experience with breast cancer to find ways to connect with her son, Aaron.

“It was Hilda Raz’s remarkable book Trans that shifted ways of reading poetry for me. If you want to read a poetry of honesty and often pain ‘in working through things’—then Raz’s poetry is exemplary in this.”—John Kinsella, author of Jam Tree Gully

2021 • 96 pp. • 6 x 9
$19.95 • paperback • 978-1-4962-2816-1

ALL ODD AND SPLENDID
Poems
HILDA RAZ

This collection of poems is an exploration of lives and selves transformed by choice and by chance.

“[All Odd and Splendid] is about how life looks and feels when fundamental categories of being have come unmoored. . . . A life as the mother of a daughter becomes [Raz’s] life as the mother of a son. Rather than mending this rip in the fabric of her existence, Raz magnifies it, turning gender’s failure to stabilize identity into a principle of representation.”—Joy Ladin, the Forward

2021 • 102 pp. • 6 x 9
$19.95 • paperback • 978-1-4962-2817-8

DIVINE HONORS
Poems
HILDA RAZ

This elegant and moving collection of poems documents Hilda Raz’s experience with breast cancer.

“Transgressive and transcendent, Hilda Raz’s . . . poems are intimately involved with the physical, corporeal world, and constantly making the leap of faith necessary to its reembodiment in words. These poems push the boundaries of what language can do to enunciate perception. Their beauty, their clarity, their mystery equally compel.”—Marilyn Hacker

2021 • 120 pp. • 6 x 9
$19.95 • paperback • 978-1-4962-2815-4

WHAT HAPPENS
Poems
HILDA RAZ

The musically wrought and emotionally candid poems explore the pleasure and pain of family relationships, the complicated joy of being a woman, and the unconventional beauty of the Great Plains.

“Hilda Raz has an appetite for the pleasures of touch, sight, love; an openness to the wounds of life and the ‘common face’ of death; a capacity for language that captures the weather and the details of a place and time, a day, the changes of a lifetime. The poetry of What Happens mirrors ‘our great and perfect / need,’ along with myths, riddles, and ‘everything possible blooming.’”—Alicia Ostriker, author of No Heaven

2021 • 134 pp. • 6 x 9
$19.95 • paperback • 978-1-4962-2818-5
IF THE BODY ALLOWS IT
Stories
MEGAN CUMMINS

Divided into six parts, If the Body Allows It is framed by the story of Marie, a woman in her thirties living in Newark, New Jersey. Suffering from a chronic autoimmune illness, she also struggles with guilt about the overdose and death of her father, whom she feels she betrayed at the end of his life. Within this frame are the stories the narrator writes after she meets and falls in love with a man whose grief mirrors her own.

“Cummins’s innovative work delivers well-crafted stories, vivid characters, and unsettling emotional gravitas.” —Publishers Weekly

“The art of truth-telling has been combined with the magic of fortune-telling. . . . Moving and haunting, edgy and searching, reaffirming and devastating. To read it is to be dazzled, and to be changed. A serious accomplishment.” —Laura Kasischke, author of Mind of Winter

“What would Emma Bovary face in our twenty-first century—would she find her needed liberty, or trudge through a life that is only different from hers cosmetically? These questions arise when I read If the Body Allows It. Megan Cummins is a gifted storyteller, and these stories, intimately written, nevertheless peel off all layers from everyday existence to reveal the deep wounds, the tender hopes, and the dilemmas, tragic and comic, of the modern-day Emmas in the world.” —Yiyun Li, author of Where Reasons End

2020 • 270 pp. • 5 1/2 x 8 1/2
$21.95 • paperback • 978-1-4962-2283-1
EXTINCTION EVENTS
Stories
LIZ BREAZEALE
This collection of short stories is a compendium of all the ways in which life can be annihilated.

“In Breazeale’s world a climatologist anticipates the destruction of Kiribati, her island home: ‘We won’t let ourselves be eroded. You can’t disappear us.’ These stories pit our most intimate aspirations against cosmic extinctions—truly spellbinding, essential stories of our time.” —Wendell Mayo, author of Survival House

“With a bold contemporary relevance, this collection captures the giddy wonder inside our panic. . . . Liz Breazeale stands her characters in the dusty history of the Chicxulub crater as they recite the poetry of humanity’s everyday aches, the breath of the dinosaurs on their necks. In the face of a mandatory evacuation, one is tempted to batten down the hatches and curl up with this marvel of a book.” —Jennifer Murvin, graphic narrative editor of Moon City Review

“The stories here bring to life the fractured worlds of artists and scientists, hucksters and hypnotists, all searching for those relationships that can connect and sustain us.” —Lawrence Coates, author of Camp Olvidoa

2019 • 138 pp. • 5 ½ x 8 ½
$17.95 • paperback • 978-1-4962-1562-8

BETTER TIMES
Short Stories
SARA BATKIE
The short stories in Better Times cover the recent past, our current era, and the world to come, interrogating the idea that so-called better times ever existed through characters stymied by loneliness, motherhood, illness, and even cataclysmic climate change.

“Batkie’s stories shrewdly commingle the hopeless and the hopeful. Her women, demoralized by the absence of fathers and husbands, by stunted careers and aimless children, are locked in self-doubt and self-flagellation, though rarely do they lose faith in ‘better times,’ even when they’ve had slim experience of them.” —Mike Peed, New York Times Book Review

“Batkie’s stellar debut, all memorably portraying an ineffable yearning from well-drawn characters who may have known or will know better times. . . . In this remarkable collection, Batkie creates strong, evocative imagery with economy and precision. She elevates both the common and uncommon experiences of her characters, resulting in something quite extraordinary.” —Publishers Weekly, starred review

“Sara Batkie is a writer for our times: lyrical and smart, clear-eyed and true. Better Times may portend just that—better times, at least for literature, in these dark hours.” —Darin Strauss, author of Half a Life

2018 • 156 pp. • 5 ½ x 8 ½
$17.95 • paperback • 978-1-4962-0787-6
BLACK JESUS AND OTHER SUPERHEROES
Stories
VENITA BLACKBURN

• 2018 PEN America Literary Award Winner—Los Angeles

Black Jesus and Other Superheroes focuses a contemporary magical-realist lens on sexuality, race, and family.

"With thoughtful subtext and symbols that address themes of race, sexuality, family, love and (dis)ability, Blackburn’s remarkably short stories are characterized by a wild imagination and beautiful prose."
—Ms. Magazine

2017 • 168 pp. • 5 ½ x 8 ½
$17.95 • paperback • 978-1-4962-0186-7

ONE-HUNDRED-KNUCKLED FIST
Stories
DUSTIN M. HOFFMAN

• Michigan Notable Books 2017 from the Library of Michigan

Set in the Midwest, One-Hundred-Knuckled Fist tells the stories of blue-collar workers with dark humor and a gritty, experimental style, revealing the reality of the daily grind with striking details.

“A compelling trip through the pressure-cooker world of the blue-collar worker.”
—Shelf Awareness

2016 • 186 pp. • 5 ½ x 8 ½
$19.95 • paperback • 978-0-8032-8854-6

WHEN ARE YOU COMING HOME?
Stories
BRYN CHANCELLOR

For the characters in Bryn Chancellor’s stories, home means physical spaces, but also love—familial, romantic, and unrequited. Throughout this book, characters leave and return, trying desperately to find their way home.

“I read Chancellor’s collection with admiration. The care with which she creates these seemingly ordinary lives is evident. She lets her characters live and insists that we care about them.”—Corey Campbell, Center for Literary Publishing

2015 • 136 pp. • 5 ½ x 8 ½
$17.95 • paperback • 978-0-8032-7722-9

NOW WE WILL BE HAPPY
AMINA GAUTIER

• 2015 President’s Book Award Gold Medal in Short Fiction from the Florida Authors and Publishers Association
• 2015 USA Book Award in Fiction: African American
• 2016 International Latino Book Award, Most Inspirational Fiction
• 2016 Independent Publisher Book Award Silver winner in Multicultural Fiction

Now We Will Be Happy is a collection of stories about Afro-Puerto Ricans, U.S.-mainland-born Puerto Ricans, and displaced native Puerto Ricans dealing with the difficulties of bicultural identities in a world that wants them to choose only one.

2014 • 140 pp. • 5 ½ x 8 ½
$16.95 • paperback • 978-0-8032-5539-5
SOME ARE ALWAYS HUNGRY
JIHYUN YUN

Some Are Always Hungry chronicles a family’s wartime survival, immigration and heirloom trauma through the lens of food, or the lack thereof. Through the vehicle of recipe and butchery poems, the collection negotiates the myriad ways diasporic communities comfort and name themselves in other nations, as well as the ways cuisine is inextricably linked to colonization, history, and survival.

“Yun’s poems are unflinching in subject matter and elegant in expression. This contrast of painful moments, beautifully rendered, makes for compelling reading.” —Sylvia Santiago, Kenyon Review

“Image by clear-eyed image, sound by tightly wrought sound, the poems in Some Are Always Hungry are a thundering revelation. At once a reckoning with immigration and historical trauma and rooted in the sensorial world, these poems are timeless and ongoing. Here is both the fever and the scar it leaves, the female body and the lineage of power, hunger, and desire, what cannot be forgotten and what keeps us alive despite it all; here is a poet staking her undeniable claim on the world.” —Ada Limón, author of The Carrying

“In this visceral yet compassionate inquiry into what makes us alive, Yun shows us how hope can be fashioned out of the desire to speak on and through atrocities. This book is one of those rare collections that stuns me back to my own life, somehow renewed, somehow better, kinder, and less alone.” —Ocean Vuong, author of Night Sky with Exit Wounds

2020 • 90 pp. • 6 x 9
$17.95 • paperback • 978-1-4962-2218-3
HARD DAMAGE
ARIA ABER

Hard Damage charts the intergenerational damage caused by war, environmental loss, and the collective grief of exile. The book revolves around questions of the legitimacy of “inherited exile”: what is one allowed to feel homesick for and why? How is the self complicit in warfare? By challenging the traditional codes of metaphor and myth and by manipulating etymology, syntax, grammar, and different languages, Aria Aber’s lyric poems and essayistic fragments explore the rich complexity of identity.

“Both its masterful depictions of complicity and its unwavering focus on what is true, asks us to consider what we owe each other as people occupying this same, dying, earth.”—Taneum Bambrick, Kenyon Review

“Hard Damage is an immensely satisfying book. It charts immigrant experience in a way which is highly imaginative but also sustained and controlled. It will be fascinating to read what Aber writes next.”—Ian Pople, Manchester Review

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