



# TUPELO PRESS

*Luminous Writing, Beautiful Books, Since 1999*

SUMMER | FALL 2018

TUPELOPRESS.ORG

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Tupelo Press is an award-winning independent literary press that publishes fine fiction, nonfiction, and poetry in books that are a joy to hold as well as read. We are a registered 501(c)3 nonprofit organization and rely on public support to fulfill our mission to publish extraordinary work that may be outside the realm of large commercial publishers. Donations are welcome and are tax-deductible.



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A celebration of the collective poetic process, the MLP is being written, couplet by couplet, by readers and writers around the world, and published online by Tupelo Press. Your contribution is part of the dynamic synergy of this unique art form.  
[www.tupelopress.org/the-million-line-poem/](http://www.tupelopress.org/the-million-line-poem/)

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Tupelo Press discovers luminous writers, gives each author the vessel of a beautiful book, and speaks to the diversity of influences upon contemporary art and culture. *Tupelo Quarterly* extends and expands upon that vision in a digital milieu, publishing work by emerging and established writers and artists of many sensibilities and styles. *Tupelo Quarterly* cultivates a generous artistic community, celebrates intellectual curiosity and creative risk, and presumes abundance. We hold the gate open, not closed.  
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Sal E. McMlore  
(281) 360-5204  
[salmcmemor@aol.com](mailto:salmcmemor@aol.com)

Stewart Koontz  
(256) 483-7969  
[cskoontz@hotmail.com](mailto:cskoontz@hotmail.com)

Larry Hollern  
(806) 236-7808  
[lhollern@aol.com](mailto:lhollern@aol.com)

**West and Southwest:**  
Wilcher Associates  
Bob Rosenberg  
(415) 564-1248  
[bob@bobrosberggroup.com](mailto:bob@bobrosberggroup.com)

Tom McCorkell  
(949) 362-0597  
[tmccork@sbcglobal.net](mailto:tmccork@sbcglobal.net)

Jim Sena  
(719) 210-5222  
[sena.wilcher@gmail.com](mailto:sena.wilcher@gmail.com)



# Dirt Eaters

Poems by Eliza Rotterman

Winner of the Snowbound Chapbook Award, chosen by  
Brenda Shaughnessy

from *Dirt Eaters*

## The multiplying wood

I call this pageantry, your green  
evering towards blue, an  
intelligent  
loneliness. I feel supernatural,  
and consider one day a child  
may ease down from the sky.  
We'll collect moss and lichen,  
adapt easily to the bitterness  
of roots.

There is a shoreline trail,  
a rankled lake. You throw rocks  
to please her, devise a plan  
for a raft. Mother and child  
paddling out, a blue forest  
chorusing.  
And in a slow, non-nuclear way,  
the sun begins the last hour of  
light.

“A lush, fierce, primal work in which the broken world still rotates and orbits—not for us as we could project, not as a metaphor for redemption—but we get to ride on it anyway. Eliza Rotterman has a voice unlike any other and familiar too: she writes, in finely faceted jewels of language set in strong lines that cut as they connect, of a woman in her body / a woman on this planet ever-aware, observing everything, suffering, believing, tracking, clocking, ticking, as she must.

The poet explodes her being for her poetry—nothing escapes—and she gives that explosion to the reader, in the form of exquisite, precise, deep beauty. I could not be more grateful that this gift was made and held faithfully to its purpose: to show us the chaos at the heart of desire, the raw stillness at the center of hope.” —**Brenda Shaughnessy**

**Eliza Rotterman** grew up in Cincinnati, Ohio. She holds an MFA from the University of Oregon and currently works as a nurse. She lives in Portland, Oregon.

**\$11.95 Trade Paperback**  
ISBN 978-1-946482-05-1  
June 1, 2018

# Flight

Poems by Chaun Ballard

Winner of the Sunken Garden Chapbook Award, chosen by Major Jackson

*Flight* gives testament to the struggle of skin color in contemporary America. Utilizing both innovation and tradition, Chaun Ballard's poems give voice to the silenced, proof to the disenfranchised, and life to the gone.

"The poems in *Flight* unspool a rich and charmed history of survival into songs that celebrate the miracle of endurance in a country defined by the peculiar phenomenon of race; many of the poems in this collection explore (or allude to) the death of Michael Brown in Ferguson with a brilliance that is underscored by the poet's extraordinary sense of sound to etch a new reality in our ears." —Major Jackson

**Chaun Ballard** was raised in St. Louis, Missouri, and San Bernardino, California. He holds an MFA from the University of Alaska–Anchorage, and his poems have recently been published in *Anomaly*, *Columbia Poetry Review*, *HEArt Online*, *Rattle*, and *Pittsburgh Poetry Review*, earning nominations for a Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net. Although he calls Alaska his home, for the past eight years he and his wife have served as educators in the Middle East and West Africa.



from *Flight*

How to Make the World Beautiful

Take the scent  
of a chalk-lined morning.

Sift it into grains.  
Grind them into people:

bring them back.  
Stuff them in your pocket

when no one is looking.  
Keep them on your person

(at all times).  
Dig a hole in the dirt

when it is known  
a village resides

at your hip.  
Unname them

forgotten—  
call them

gardens,  
watch them grow.

**\$11.95 Trade Paperback**  
**ISBN 978-1-946482-13-6**  
**July 1, 2018**



# At the Gate of All Wonder

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Novel by Kevin McIlvoy

Samantha Peabody, a bio-acoustician and eccentric recluse living in North Carolina's Pisgah National Forest, recalls in this journal-like novel her year with two children who accompanied her in a "Sonic Adventure Program," deep in the woods. In its uncanny texture and structure, the novel contemplates the transformations possible for those who truly hear the sounds of wilderness, where one's true nature sings.

from *At the Gate of All Wonder*

October 2 – 8, 2003

"Your heads are so full of water,"  
I said to my two little things,  
eight and six years old.

They remember. I know they do.

We were hovering over the dark  
and pooling creek a few yards  
from our campsite. The thun-  
der sounded as if that spiraling  
liquid mirror was its source.

"Pea!" called out the one,  
swaying in order to swirl  
in that mirror. My name,  
Samantha Peabody, a perfectly  
acceptable name, was not good  
enough for this one.

"Pea!" she called again.

The other swirl-swayed. The  
other always imitated her older  
sister.

"Deeply odd, wonderfully original, *At the Gate of All Wonder* has the power of fresh myth. From these enchanted woods we emerge ... terrified, illuminated, struck all over again by the wonders of the natural world and the passionate strangeness of familial love." —**Andrea Barrett**

"What a strange and miraculous book this is. The soundscape of deep woods, children in training to hear beyond the hearable, their cosmically cranky instructor, petty and lethal revenge on all sides: somehow a novel has been made out of this. Don't expect to emerge from it unchanged." —**Joan Silber**

**Kevin McIlvoy's** previous books are *The Fifth Station* (Collier, 1989), *Hyssop* (Harper Perennial, 1999), *Little Peg* (Harper Perennial, 2000), *The Complete History of New Mexico* (Graywolf, 2005), and *57 Octaves Below Middle C* (Four Way, 2017). He teaches in the graduate creative writing program at Warren Wilson College and lives near Asheville, North Carolina.

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**\$17.95 Trade Paperback**  
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**September 1, 2018**

# Republic of Mercy

Poetry by Sharon Wang

Winner of the Kundiman Poetry Prize, chosen by Cassandra Cleghorn and Jeffrey Levine

In Sharon Wang's thrilling and corporeal geometry, touch dominates, if often in its 'aftermarks': sines, whiffs, folds of fabric, echoing gestures between bodies. With generous language and quicksilver intelligence, Wang expresses "a hunger so large it stops the mouth." Her poems describe what is "hard and brilliant," the spaces between objects, and what's left in the wake of losses.

"Despite its attunement both to elegy and to witness, the mode is praise: 'He loved the world. He loved it suddenly / and without reason.' . . . As the poet works to understand, 'If in fact it wasn't possible to build / the world anew,' she does build—extravagantly, judiciously, lovingly. The result is a book of radiant integrity." — **from the judges' citation for the Kundiman Poetry Prize**

Sharon Wang's poems have appeared in *Blackbird*, *Tupelo Quarterly*, *Anti-*, *OmniVerse*, and *The Volta*. She earned an MFA from Washington University in St. Louis and currently lives in the Boston area, where she works as a web developer. This is her first published collection.



from *Republic of Mercy*

Swan Song/ Falter/

When the bells changed, I put them  
in his mouth

I put my hands over

Something shaking within  
that noise/ as if  
our hands were leaves/ our arms  
branches

If breath could make/ a peak  
a hook, an arrow, a missive

Something was lost  
We stared at each other  
as if we were  
the field where it was last rumored  
to have been seen

**\$17.95 Trade Paperback**  
**ISBN 978-1-946482-12-9**  
**October 1, 2018**



from *Fire Season*

In the grasslands they put an airport. There's always a good reason. The grasses are dry, golden around the coyotes, late summer. On the drive to work, exhausted, I see two large white planes—heavy-bottomed, boat-like—pass low. On the tails and fuselage are wide orange stripes. They're going to drop water on the wildfires, the wildfires that rained ash over fifty miles onto the hood of my car, the hood of my car that was up to keep rats from chewing the wires, the wires that they've chewed anyways. My wife saw the fire start from where she nursed on the couch. The lightning of a summer thunderstorm that came in from the desert struck the mountain two ranges over. This is in southern California. We have a baby. There's always a fire somewhere, and we spend our days pacing out the distances between there and now.

**\$17.95 Trade Paperback**  
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**December 1, 2018**

# Fire Season

Poetry by Patrick Coleman

Winner of the Berkshire Prize for a First or Second Book of Poetry

Occasioned by the birth of a first child and originally spoken aloud into a digital audio recorder on the poet's long commute between the art museum where he worked and his home in a neighborhood burned in the Witch Creek Fire of 2007, each of the poems in Patrick Coleman's first book resists the confusions of twenty-first-century parenthood, marriage, art, and commerce. By turns conversational and anxious, metaphysical and self-mocking, celebratory yet permeated by an awareness of life's flickering ephemerality, *Fire Season* is a search for gratitude among reasons to be afraid—and proof that a person can pass through the fires and come out the other side alive.

"The poems in *Fire Season* are full of friction—common word touching common word ... They are also philosophical and personal. Patrick Coleman is tuned in to landscape, language, and humanity, each poem casual as office talk and heightened by their proximity to art and by the force of the sentence—such arresting sentences." —Carol Frost, judge for the Berkshire Prize

**Patrick Coleman** is an editor for art publications as well as program manager of the Arthur C. Clarke Center for Human Imagination at the University of California–San Diego. He holds a BA from the University of California–Irvine and an MFA from Indiana University, and was editor/contributor for the exhibition catalogue *The Art of Music* and a contributor to *Into India: South Asian Paintings* from the San Diego Museum of Art. His first novel *The Churchgoer* will be published by Harper Perennial in 2019. He lives in Ramona, California, with his wife and two daughters.



# Xeixa: Fourteen Catalan Poets

Poetry anthology edited by Marlon L. Fick and Francisca Esteve

During the post-civil war era, General Francisco Franco's fascist government forbade the people of Spain's Catalonia region from speaking, reading, and writing in Catalan, a crime punishable by imprisonment or execution. Throughout these years, the work of Catalan poets could only be found via the underground.

Marlon L. Fick and Francisca Esteve traveled to meet each of the poets featured in this anthology, embarking on the long road of joy, pain, and friendship that is the work of translation. These fourteen poets, like fourteen blackbirds, provide keen angles of perception in beautiful and lyrical poetry, sometimes ecstatic, sometimes nostalgic, and always engaging, until now almost entirely unknown to U.S. readers.

**Marlon L. Fick** holds a BA from the University of Kansas, an MA from New York University, and PhD from the University of Kansas. He is author of three poetry collections published in Mexico and of the novel *The Nowhere Man* (Jaded Ibis, 2015), and editor/translator of *The River Is Wide / El río es ancho: Twenty Mexican Poets* (New Mexico, 2005). Having received fellowships from the U.S. National Endowment for the Arts and ConaCulta in Mexico; the Ramon Llull Award for Literature in Catalonia; and a Best American Literary Translator award from the Latitudes Foundation, he now teaches at the University of Texas–Permian Basin.

**Francisca Esteve** was born in Spain in València, grew up in Barcelona, and joined the anti-fascist resistance movement that struggled to keep Catalan culture alive. She trained at Escuela de Artes Aplicadas Massana and became a painter, eventually immigrating to Mexico City. After she and Marlon Fick married, they lived in China before coming to live in the United States in 2014.



from *Xeixa: Fourteen Catalan Poets*

All the Seas by Rosa Font Massot

To be one field means to be all fields  
with flowers and wheat or apple  
trees  
and pomegranates by the road.  
To be a sea means being all seas,  
the essence of blue in serene inlets  
and to navigate forever without a  
course.

To be a branch is to be all branches,  
birch and ash, willow and cypress—  
to draw new paths in unexplored  
skies.

One book is all books:  
light of the cosmos, letters of  
thousands  
of existing alphabets, lost or not yet  
come to be.

One voice is the voice of all those  
who do not speak,  
the voice of the forgotten, the  
voiceless:  
it is yours and mine.

One living being is all living beings:  
The eyes of one are all eyes,  
the hands, all hands.

We live in each voice, die in each  
body.

**\$19.95 Trade Paperback**  
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**November 1, 2018**



## Heart

A child of, say, six knows you're  
not the shape  
she's learned to make by  
drawing half along a fold,  
cutting, then opening. Where do  
you open?  
Where do you carry your dead?  
There's no locket  
for that—hinged, hanging on a  
chain that greens  
your throat. And the dead inside  
you, don't you  
hear them breathing? You must  
have a hole  
they can press their gray lips to.  
If you open—  
when you open—will we find  
them folded inside?  
In what shape? I mean what cut  
shape is made  
whole by opening? I mean  
besides the heart.

**\$16.95 Trade Paperback**  
**ISBN 978-1-946482-01-3**  
**October 1, 2017**

# Good Bones

Poems by Maggie Smith

2018 IPPY Award in Poetry, GOLD

Featuring “Good Bones,” which has made a difference to so many people around the globe—called “Official Poem of 2016” by the BBC/Public Radio International

Named one of *Entropy*'s “Best of 2017”

“The title poem of *Good Bones* went viral this year because its central theme — wanting to believe in the goodness of the world for the sake of one’s children — connected with so many people. The other pieces in this collection, Smith’s third, provide a fuller understanding of the complexities faced by the speaker . . . No matter the style or subject, the writing remains honest, compassionate and graceful.” — **Elizabeth Lund**, *Washington Post*, “The Best Poetry of 2017”

“While the now-famous poem lends its name to Smith’s third poetry collection, and remains one of the book’s highlights, readers will find a far greater bounty within.” — **Adam Tavel**, *Plume*

“Come for Smith’s viral title poem, but stay for her range as she builds a notable collection, one suffused with grace, and—dare I say it—hope.” — **Nick Ripatrzone**, *The Millions*

**Maggie Smith's** previous books are *The Well Speaks of Its Own Poison* (Tupelo, 2015), *Lamp of the Body* (Red Hen, 2005), and three prize-winning chapbooks. Her poem “Good Bones” was tweeted and translated across the world, featured on the TV drama *Madam Secretary*, and covered in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Slate*, the *Guardian*, and beyond. She was named the 2016 Ohio Poet of the Year.

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### Contact Us

Mail: P.O. Box 1767  
North Adams, MA 01247

### Delivery:

243 Union Street #305  
North Adams, MA 01247

Phone: (413) 664-9611

Fax: (413) 664-9711

email: [contact@tupelopress.org](mailto:contact@tupelopress.org)

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