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GRAYWOLF PRESS





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The triumphant follow-up collection to *The Game of Boxes*, winner of the James Laughlin Award

Human Hours

Poems

CATHERINE BARNETT

Catherine Barnett's tragicomic third collection, *Human Hours*, shuttles between a Whitmanian embrace of others and a kind of rapacious solitude. Barnett speaks from the middle of hope and confusion, carrying philosophy into the everyday. Watching a son become a young man, a father become a restless beloved shell, and a country betray its democratic ideals, the speakers try to make sense of such departures. Four lyric essays investigate the essential urge and appeal of questions that are "accursed," that are limited—and unanswered—by answers. What are we to do with the endangered human hours that remain to us? Across the leaps and swerves of this collection, the fevered mind tries to slow—or at least measure—time with quiet bravura: by counting a lover's breaths; by remembering a father's space-age watch; by envisioning the apocalyptic future while bedding down on a hard, cold floor, head resting on a dictionary. *Human Hours* pulses with the absurd, with humor that accompanies the precariousness of the human condition.

Look at these books: hope.

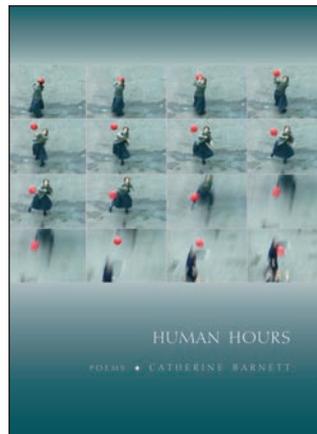
Look at this face: hope.

**When I was young I studied with Richard Rorty, that was lucky,
I stared out the window and couldn't understand a word he said,
he drew a long flat line after the C he gave me,
the class was called Metaphysics and Epistemology,
that's eleven syllables, that's
hope hope.**

—from "O Esperanza!"

"*Human Hours*, in its restless questioning, performs the drama of desire inside a world where hours accumulate toward loss. . . . What remains is a brilliant (at times very funny) phenomenological exploration of that which marks our capacious possibilities."

—Claudia Rankine



Poetry, 112 pages, 6½ x 9

Paperback, \$16.00

September

978-1-55597-814-3

Ebook Available

Brit., trans., audio, dram.:

Graywolf Press

1st ser.: Author c/o Graywolf Press

ALSO AVAILABLE

The Game of Boxes, Poetry,

Paperback (978-1-55597-620-0),
\$16.00

CATHERINE BARNETT

is the author of *Into Perfect Spheres Such Holes Are Pierced* and *The Game of Boxes*, winner of the James Laughlin Award. She has received a Whiting Award and a Guggenheim Fellowship. She lives in New York City.

An Excerpt from *She Would Be King*

If she wanted to continue, Gbessa first had to rid the road of a slow-moving snake. Greenish brown with golden eyes as difficult to gaze into as the sun, the snake's body was no different in color from the woods it had crawled from, and it seemed to Gbessa that the surrounding bushes were jealous of her departure, so they extended their toes to block her path. Orange dust stained the belly of the snake, which writhed as it hissed, and Gbessa pointed a five-foot stick in its direction. The snake was not afraid of her, or of the stick, and it raised its head and advanced.

The confrontation occurred several moonfalls after that searing hot day when she was banished from Lai for good. She had championed that path for weeks, stumbling over iron pebbles and timber branches departed from their roots, squeezed between sugarcane stalks, and still, refusing to look back. Strands of her hair left her for the veils of clay grains that also traveled the long and pitiless road. Gbessa could not return. Safua was in the other direction, hand in hand with her rejection, and also those deaths. Gbessa lightly poked the belly of the excitable creature, and at once it lunged at her. She took a step back, only barely avoiding a bite on her shin.

I was there that day, drawn to her, just as I was drawn to those gifted others who were present the day the ships came.

"Take care, my darling," I whispered in Gbessa's ear. "Take care, my friend."

She glanced over her shoulder, as if she had heard me, or as if she hoped the movement was Safua, and the snake lunged again, this time biting her ankle before fleeing into the stalks at the other end of the road. Gbessa fell to the ground, yelling. She cried, and it was clear that her leg was in pain, but also her heart, because she held the tears captive, clenching her jaw closed through the sobs. She rubbed her ankle as if digging for bones, then squeezed the reddened skin where the snake had bitten, squeezed hard to relieve herself of the poison. Perhaps nothing would happen beyond the sting. Perhaps she would faint from the pain. But eventually, she would wake up. Gbessa rubbed her wound, but she knew then, as she knew always, that this poison would remain with her forever. She knew then, as she knew always, that she, like her love for Safua, would not, could not, die.

A novel of exhilarating range, magical realism, and history—a dazzling retelling of Liberia’s formation

She Would Be King

A Novel

WAYÉTU MOORE

Wayétu Moore’s powerful debut novel, *She Would Be King*, reimagines the dramatic story of Liberia’s early years through three unforgettable characters who share an uncommon bond. Gbessa, exiled from the West African village of Lai, is starved, bitten by a viper, and left for dead, but still she survives. June Dey, raised on a plantation in Virginia, hides his unusual strength until a confrontation with the overseer forces him to flee. Norman Aragon, the child of a white British colonizer and a Maroon slave from Jamaica, can fade from sight at will, just as his mother could. When the three meet in the settlement of Monrovia, their gifts help them salvage the tense relationship between the African American settlers and the indigenous tribes, as a new nation forms around them.

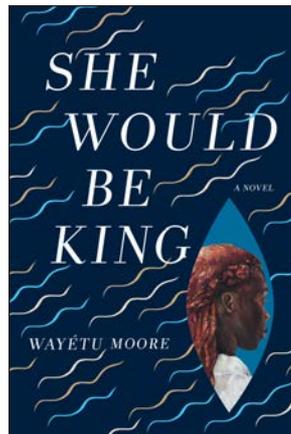
Moore’s intermingling of history and magical realism finds voice not just in these three characters but also in the fleeting spirit of the wind, who embodies an ancient wisdom. “If she was not a woman,” the wind says of Gbessa, “she would be king.” In this vibrant story of the African diaspora, Moore, a talented storyteller and a daring writer, illuminates with radiant and exacting prose the tumultuous roots of a country inextricably bound to the United States. *She Would Be King* is a novel of profound depth set against a vast canvas and a transcendent debut from a major new author.

“This magical retelling of Liberia’s beginning is so original, so bold and poetic, Wayétu Moore is destined for comparisons to Yann Martel, Markus Zusak, and Paulo Coelho.”

—**Susan Henderson, author of *The Flicker of Old Dreams***

“Wayétu Moore has written a powerful novel which sheds light on the struggles of a people to cast off the yoke of slavery and oppression, and shape their future. Her language is beautiful and her efforts a labor of love.”

—**Vamba Sherif, author of *Land of My Fathers***



Fiction, 312 pages, 6 x 9

Hardcover, \$26.00

September

978-1-55597-817-4

Ebook Available

Brit., audio: Graywolf Press

Trans., 1st ser., dram.: Writers House LLC

WAYÉTU MOORE is the founder of One Moore Book and is a graduate of Howard University, Columbia University, and the University of Southern California. She teaches at the City University of New York’s John Jay College and lives in Brooklyn.

An Excerpt from *Scribe*

What he wanted was the hardest thing. He wanted a letter in the declarative style, and he wanted to be with her—at least on the grounds of her property—while she wrote it. Then he wanted what they rarely requested anymore: he wanted her to memorize the letter before the pair of them destroyed it forever. He would cut and stack the wood before she began writing, if that was what she required. And he would camp by the creek, eating his own dried fruit and meat. He wouldn't impose on her. But he also wanted her to carry the letter to its destination. He wanted her to speak its words aloud in the presence of the person who needed to hear them most. He described the place she would have to go, where the letter would become his painful request for forgiveness. He had a name. It was a crossroads far away.

"You're asking beyond my limits," she told him. "I don't travel anymore."

Hendricks looked at her with eyes the color of shed snakeskin. She could hear some kind of emotion emulsify itself in the tube of his throat. He seemed desperate. "I got to do this," he said, gulping. "I got to make this right. I'll give whatever you ask. At Snow Creek, they tell that you walk all the way to Tennessee, or down to the lights of Richmond."

"I won't go to Richmond," she said. "I won't go there ever again."

"What'll you take?" he asked. "I ain't got gold or a living child. I got nothing precious left to trade."

She felt the old cruelty rise up in her as powerfully as a moon tide. Her sister had begged too, hadn't she? And begging hadn't saved her sister's life or gotten her what she wanted. Her sister had believed in the generous giving of gifts—valuables handed to other people willy-nilly and free of expectation—when she should have put her faith in the cold logic of exchange.

"There is one thing you could do for me," she said with the hard shape of her mouth. "It's a rare deed, something men around here claim they have accomplished when they're swapping lies. It won't be easy. You'll probably fail. But I won't carry your letter to that crossroads for anything less."

**A haunting, evocative tale about the
power of storytelling**

Scribe

A Novel

ALYSON HAGY

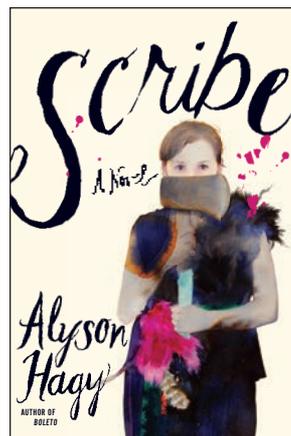
A brutal civil war has ravaged the country, and contagious fevers have decimated the population. Abandoned farmhouses litter the isolated mountain valleys and shady hollows. The economy has been reduced to barter and trade. In this craggy, unwelcoming world, the central character of *Scribe* ekes out a lonely living on the family farmstead where she was raised and where her sister met an untimely end. She lets a migrant group known as the Uninvited set up temporary camps on her land, and maintains an uneasy peace with her cagey neighbors and local enforcer Billy Kingery. She has learned how to make papers and inks, and she has become known for her letter-writing skills, which she exchanges for tobacco, firewood, and other scarce resources. An unusual request for a letter from a man with hidden motivations unleashes the ghosts of her troubled past and sets off a series of increasingly calamitous events that culminate in a harrowing journey to a crossroads.

Drawing on traditional folktales and the history and culture of Appalachia, Alyson Hagy has crafted a gripping, swiftly plotted novel that touches on pressing issues of our time—migration, pandemic disease, the rise of authoritarianism—and makes a compelling case for the power of stories to both show us the world and transform it.

Praise for *Boleto*

“In her gift for the language of horses, as in the beauty of her prose, Hagy will inevitably recall Annie Proulx, Kent Haruf and Cormac McCarthy. But she is writing as much about wealth and class, about work and privilege, as about horses and the Western landscape.” —*The Washington Post*

“[The] reader who takes time to savor Hagy’s abundant storytelling gifts will be rewarded.” —*Chicago Tribune*



Fiction, 176 pages, 5½ x 8¼

Paperback, \$16.00

October

978-1-55597-818-1

Ebook Available

Brit., trans., audio: Graywolf Press
1st ser., dram.: Brandt & Hochman

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Graveyard of the Atlantic, Fiction,
Paperback (978-1-55597-301-8),
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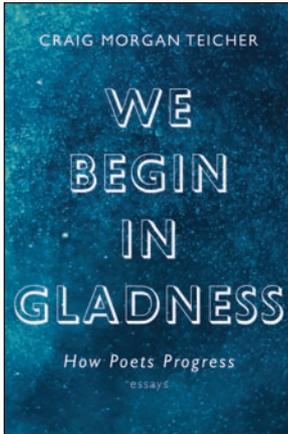
Snow, Ashes, Fiction, Paperback
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Ghosts of Wyoming, Fiction,
Paperback (978-1-55597-548-7),
\$15.00

Boleto, Fiction, Paperback
(978-1-55597-663-7), \$15.00

Madonna on Her Back, Ebook
(978-1-55597-885-3), \$9.99

ALYSON HAGY was raised on a farm in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia. She is the author of seven previous works of fiction, most recently *Boleto*. She lives in Laramie, Wyoming.



Essays, 176 pages, 5½ x 8¼

Paperback, \$16.00

November

978-1-55597-821-1

Ebook Available

Brit., trans., audio, dram.:

Graywolf Press

1st ser.: Author c/o Graywolf Press

CRAIG MORGAN TEICHER

is an acclaimed poet and critic. He is the author of three books of poetry, including *The Trembling Answers*, and regularly writes reviews for *Los Angeles Times*, NPR, and the *New York Times Book Review*. He lives in New Jersey.

One of our most perceptive critics on the ways that poets develop poems, a career, and a life

We Begin in Gladness

How Poets Progress

CRAIG MORGAN TEICHER

“The staggering thing about a life’s work is it takes a lifetime to complete,” Craig Morgan Teicher writes in these luminous essays. *We Begin in Gladness* considers how poets start out, how they learn to hear themselves, and how some offer us that rare, glittering thing—lasting work. Teicher traces the poetic development in the works of Sylvia Plath, John Ashbery, Louise Glück, and Francine J. Harris, among others, to illuminate the paths they forged—by dramatic breakthroughs, or by slow increments, and always by perseverance. *We Begin in Gladness* is indispensable for readers curious about the artistic life and for writers wondering how they might light out—or even scale the peak of the mountain.

Though it seems, at first, like an art of speaking, poetry is an art of listening. The poet trains to hear clearly and, as much as possible, without interruption, the voice of the mind, the voice that gathers, packs with meaning, and unpacks the language the poet knows. It can take a long time to learn to let this voice speak without getting in its way. This slow learning, the growth of this habit of inner attentiveness, is poetic development, and it is the substance of the poet’s art. Of course, this growth is rarely steady, never linear, and is sometimes not actually growth but diminishment—that’s all part of the compelling story of a poet’s way forward.

—from the Introduction

“Horace asked poets to delight and instruct, and this collection of thoughtful, readable essays by a very attentive poet and critic does both. . . . Teicher does the right thing for poets (like Brenda Hillman and Lucille Clifton) not ordinarily read together, and that skill makes him an exemplary guide. . . . *We Begin in Gladness* is very inviting and sometimes very wise.”

—Stephanie Burt

An extraordinary lyric and visual meditation on place, nature, and art rippling out from Marfa, Texas

Hey, Marfa

Poems

JEFFREY YANG

Situated in the outreaches of southwest Texas, the town of Marfa has long been an oasis for artists, immigrants looking for work, and ranchers, while the ghosts of the indigenous and the borders between languages and nations are apparent everywhere. Poet and translator Jeffrey Yang experienced the vastness of desert, township, sky, and time itself as a profound clash of dislocation and familiarity. What does it mean to survive in a physical and metaphorical desert? How does a habitat long associated with wilderness and death become a center for nourishment and art?

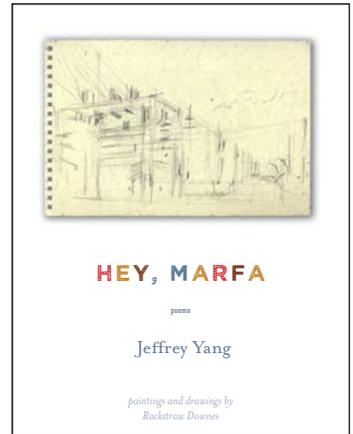
Yang has fashioned a fascinating, multifaceted work—an anti-travel guide, an anti-western, a book of last words—that is a lyrical, anthropological investigation into history, culture, and extremity of place. Paintings and drawings of Marfa’s landscapes and substations by artist Rackstraw Downes intertwine with Yang’s texts as mutual nodes and lines of energy. *Hey, Marfa* is a desert diary scaled to music that aspires to emit particles of light.

“leave your pretense at the Prada, a quiet simplicity settles in, to start anew or continue to lose your way and loose your imagination. . . .” Stra pauses, tosses back his Mezcalero, and I notice the scar running across the gular skin of his throat. “But hey, Marfa, what do I know, I just got here, tomorrow hasta pronto—an airstrip would kill you.”

—from “Stra”

“Jeffrey Yang’s collaboration with Rackstraw Downes (painter here of substations—substations transform voltage) is a commonplace book, memoir, and hybrid obituary for things. . . . *Hey, Marfa* transmits voltage or vitalized matter as words reach to words.”

—Susan Howe



Poetry, 184 pages, 7 x 9
Color images throughout
Paperback, \$20.00
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1st ser.: Author c/o Graywolf Press

ALSO AVAILABLE

An Aquarium, Poetry, Paperback
(978-1-55597-513-5), \$16.00
Vanishing-Line, Poetry, Paperback
(978-1-55597-594-4), \$15.00
June Fourth Elegies by Liu Xiaobo,
trans. Jeffrey Yang, Hardcover
(978-1-55597-610-7), \$26.00

JEFFREY YANG is the author of two previous poetry books, *Vanishing-Line* and *An Aquarium*, winner of the PEN/Joyce Osterweil Award. He is the translator of Nobel Peace Prize recipient Liu Xiaobo’s *June Fourth Elegies*. Yang lives in Beacon, New York.

An Excerpt from the Introduction by Tracy K. Smith

This is why I love poems: they invite me to sit down and listen to a voice speaking thoughtfully and passionately about what it feels like to be alive. Usually the someone doing the talking—the poem’s speaker—is a person I’d never get the chance to meet were it not for the poem. Because the distance between us is too great. Or because we are too unlike one another to ever feel this at ease face-to-face. Or maybe because the person talking to me never actually existed as anything other than a figment of a poet’s imagination, a character invented for reasons I may not ever know. Even when that someone is the real-life poet speaking of things that have actually happened, there is something different—some new strength, vulnerability, or authority—that the poem fosters. This is why I love poems: they require me to sit still, listen deeply, and imagine putting myself in someone else’s unfamiliar shoes. The world I return to when the poem is over seems fuller and more comprehensible as a result.

American Journal: Fifty Poems for Our Time is an offering for people who love poems the way I do. It is also an offering for those who love them in different ways, and those who don’t yet know what their relationship with poetry will be. I hope there is even something here to please readers who, for whatever the reason, might feel themselves to be at odds with poetry. These fifty poems—culled from living American poets of different ages, backgrounds, and aesthetic approaches, and with different views of what it feels like to be alive—welcome you to listen and be surprised, amused, consoled. These poems invite you to remember something you once knew, to see something you’ve never seen, and to range from one set of concerns to another. For the time that you are reading them, and even after, these poems will collapse the distance between you and fifty different real or imagined people with fifty different outlooks on the human condition.

Poets Included in *American Journal*

Jan Beatty	Aracelis Girmay	Patricia Lockwood	Mary Szybist
Jericho Brown	Nathalie Handal	Layli Long Soldier	Natasha Trethewey
Tina Chang	Joy Harjo	Patrick Phillips	Brian Turner
Victoria Chang	Yona Harvey	Lia Purpura	Ellen Bryant Voigt
Oliver de la Paz	Terrance Hayes	Melissa Range	Susan Wheeler
Natalie Diaz	Cathy Park Hong	Matt Rasmussen	Dara Wier
Matthew Dickman	Marie Howe	Erika L. Sánchez	Christian Wiman
Mark Doty	Major Jackson	Steve Scafid	Charles Wright
Norman Dubie	Ilya Kaminsky	Nicole Sealey	John Yau
Jehanne Dubrow	Laura Kasischke	Charif Shanahan	Dean Young
Eve L. Ewing	Donika Kelly	Solmaz Sharif	Kevin Young
Vievee Francis	Robin Coste Lewis	Danez Smith	
Ross Gay	Ada Limón	Susan Stewart	

A landmark anthology envisioned by
Tracy K. Smith, Poet Laureate of the United States

American Journal

Fifty Poems for Our Time

SELECTED AND WITH AN

INTRODUCTION BY TRACY K. SMITH

Published in association with the Library of Congress, *American Journal* presents fifty contemporary poems that explore and celebrate our country and our lives. Poet Laureate of the United States and Pulitzer Prize winner Tracy K. Smith has gathered a remarkable chorus of voices that ring up and down the registers of American poetry. In the elegant arrangement of this anthology, we hear stories from rural communities and urban centers, laments of loss in war and in grief, experiences of immigrants, outcries at injustices, and poems that honor elders, evoke history, and praise our efforts to see and understand one another. Taking its title from a poem by Robert Hayden, the first African American appointed as Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress, *American Journal* investigates our time with curiosity, wonder, and compassion.



© Rachel Eliza Griffiths

TRACY K. SMITH is the Poet Laureate of the United States. She is the author of four poetry collections: *Wade in the Water*; *Life on Mars*, winner of the Pulitzer Prize; *Duende*, winner of the James Laughlin Award of the Academy of American Poets; and *The Body's Question*, winner of the Cave Canem Poetry Prize. She is also the author of an acclaimed memoir, *Ordinary Light*, which was a finalist for the National Book Award. Smith teaches at Princeton University and lives in New Jersey.



AMERICAN JOURNAL
FIFTY POEMS FOR OUR TIME
SELECTED AND INTRODUCED BY
TRACY K. SMITH
POET LAUREATE OF THE UNITED STATES



Poetry, 120 pages, 4½ x 7

Hardcover, \$22.00

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Paperback, \$14.00

978-1-55597-815-0

September

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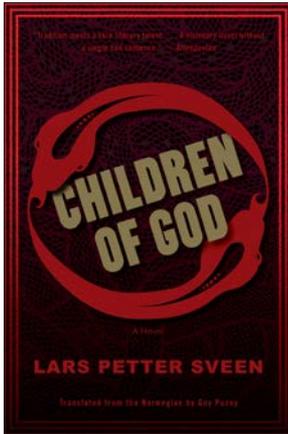
ALSO AVAILABLE

The Body's Question, Poetry,
Paperback (978-1-55597-391-9),
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Duende, Poetry, Paperback
(978-1-55597-475-6), \$16.00

Life on Mars, Poetry, Paperback
(978-1-55597-584-5), \$16.00

Wade in the Water, Poetry,
Hardcover (978-1-55597-813-6),
\$24.00



Fiction, 256 pages, 5½ x 8¼

Paperback, \$16.00

October

978-1-55597-820-4

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Trans., dram.: H. Aschehoug & Co.

LARS PETTER SVEEN was named one of Norway's ten best authors under thirty-five by *Morgenbladet*, and has received Tarjei Vesaas's Debutant Prize and the Per Olov Enquist Literary Prize. *Children of God* is his first book to be translated into English.

Daring and original stories set in New Testament times, from a rising young Norwegian author

Children of God

A Novel

LARS PETTER SVEEN

TRANSLATED FROM THE NORWEGIAN BY GUY PUZEY

Lars Petter Sveen's *Children of God* recounts the lives of people on the margins of the New Testament; thieves, Roman soldiers, prostitutes, lepers, healers, and the occasional disciple all get a chance to speak. With language free of judgment or moralizing, Sveen covers familiar ground in unusual ways. In the opening story, a group of soldiers are tasked with carrying out King Herod's edict to slaughter the young male children in Bethlehem but waver in their resolve. These interwoven stories harbor surprises at every turn, as the characters reappear. A group of thieves on the road to Jericho encounters no good Samaritan but themselves. A boy healed of his stutter will later regress. A woman searching for her lover from beyond the grave cannot find solace. At crucial moments an old blind man appears, urging the characters to give in to their darker impulses.

Children of God was a best seller in Norway, where it won the Per Olov Enquist Literary Prize and gathered ecstatic reviews. Sveen's subtle elevation of the conflict between light and dark focuses on the varied struggles these often-ignored individuals face. Yet despite the dark tone, Sveen's stories retain a buoyancy, thanks to Guy Puzey's supple and fleet-footed translation. This deeply original and moving book, in Sveen's restrained and gritty telling, brings to light stories that reflect our own time, from a setting everyone knows.

"A visionary novel without a single bad sentence."

—*Aftenposten*

"A major literary achievement. . . . Convincing and emotionally strong because it so strongly reflects our time."

—*Dagsavisen*

"*Children of God* is in every way a well-deserved breakthrough for a young author whose work is mature, original and bold."

—Per Olov Enquist Literary Prize statement

A reissue of Eula Biss's groundbreaking
essay collection, winner of the National Book
Critics Circle Award

Notes from No Man's Land

American Essays

EULA BISS

Acclaimed for its frank and fascinating investigation of racial identity, and reissued on its ten-year anniversary, *Notes from No Man's Land* begins with a series of lynchings, ends with a list of apologies, and in an unsettling new coda revisits a litany of murders that no one seems capable of solving. Eula Biss explores race in America through the experiences chronicled in these essays—teaching in a Harlem school on the morning of 9/11, reporting from an African American newspaper in San Diego, watching the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina from a college town in Iowa, and rereading Laura Ingalls Wilder in the Rogers Park neighborhood of Chicago. What she reveals is how families, schools, communities, and our country participate in preserving white privilege. *Notes from No Man's Land* is an essential portrait of America that established Biss as one of the most distinctive and inventive essayists of our time.

“Two of the qualities that make Eula Biss’s essays in *Notes from No Man's Land* compelling and beautiful are precision and independence—independence from orthodoxies of the right and left and the conventions of literary essays and their displays of sensibility and sensitivity. . . . She’s important to this moment, important to the opening up of what essays can be, important for setting a standard of integrity and insight, and she’s also a joy to read.”

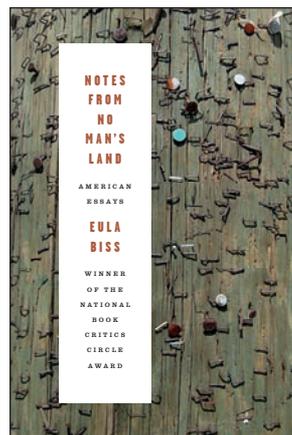
—Rebecca Solnit

“Biss is telling us the story of our country—one we never saw coming.”

—Chicago Tribune

“*Notes from No Man's Land* is a beautiful exercise in consciousness; in bringing both intelligence and experience to bear on a subject that has implications for the way one behaves in the world.”

—Los Angeles Times



Essays, 256 pages, 5½ x 8¼

Paperback, \$16.00

November

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Ebook Available

Brit.: Fitzcarraldo Editions

Audio: Audible Inc.

Trans., dram.: Frances Goldin

Literary Agency

ALSO AVAILABLE

On Immunity, Social Science,
Paperback (978-1-55597-720-7),
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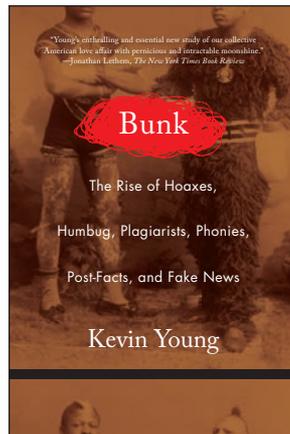
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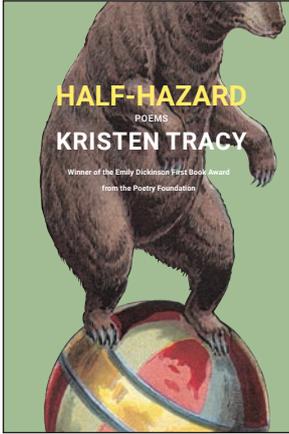
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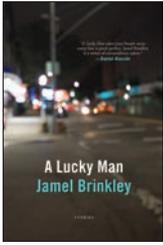
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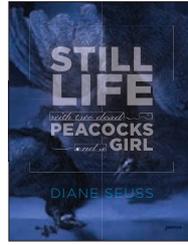
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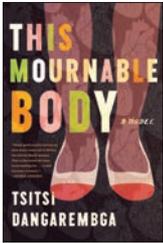
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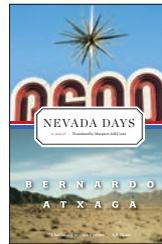
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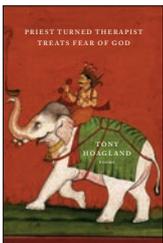
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