2015 RELEASES

etruscan press
A Note From the Executive Director . . .

“Mission Statement.” It sounds so grim. A cattle call for commandos, zealots, and desk jockeys. Or just joyless sex. But as we skip into our fifteenth year, Etruscan’s mission to nurture a dialogue among genres feels more like dance than dolor. Twirl, and join Arcadia Road, a poetic trilogy about life on earth with roots deep as Hesiod. Moonwalk, and hear American Anger, a burning excoriation of the psyche beneath the empire. We’ve got Cannot Stay, a travel book that explores travel itself; YOU., a screed that would make Bukowski blush; Crave: Sojourn of a Hungry Soul, a memoir of struggle woven in dream language; and The Other Sky, a vibrant shadow-dance between an artist and poet. This isn’t just dialogue, it’s intimate whisper and raucous shout, discovery and exultation. It’s music. Hey universe, wanna dance?

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Poems and Their Making: A Conversation

Anthology of Poetry and Essays
Moderated by PHILIP BRADY

Available April 2015

Poems and Their Making is a collection of original poems and essays by a diverse cast of inter-connected contemporary American poets, delving into the origin and development of poetic thought, line, and structure. Each poem is followed by an essay by the poet illustrative of some particular issue in craft or theory raised during the poem’s making. While exploring the mysterious process of making poems, Poems and Their Making offers a ground’s eye view of the variety of current poetic practices, and nurtures a dialogue between poetry and critical prose.
YOU.

Poetry

JOSEPH P. WOOD

Available July 2015

With Catullus, Bukowski, Whitman, and St. Teresa of Avila as guides, YOU. is the ultimate relationship poem: husband and wife, father and daughter, addict and rehab, self and god. YOU. explores how an “I” and “You” are subjectively constructed, whether through grotesquery and violence, sexuality and gender, or faith and disbelief.

"Joseph Wood is a photographer of the American Word, as well as a totally unboring poet saxophoning syllables and provoking vivid images of sharp winter stars and anemic light."

--Mark Spitzer, author of Return of the Gar

JOSEPH P. WOOD is the author of four books and five chapbooks of poetry, which most recently include Broken Cage and Fold of the Map.

6 x 9 | 110 pp | US $16.00 | 978-0-9897532-5-8

Arcadia Road: A Trilogy

Poetry

THORPE MOECKEL

Available September 2015

This trilogy of long poems is narrative, lyrical, and meditative. Moeckel’s language is as rich, lush, and organic as its soil. Arcadia Road is audacious, down-to-earth; strange yet intimate, offering nuanced meditations on sustainability, permaculture, and the circle of life: a visceral, intimate, and cosmic excursion into techniques, textures, and implications of rural, modern homestead living in Virginia’s Blue Ridge.

"The sustained vision that binds together the three long poems of this book is remarkable ... Best of all, the voice of these poems is filled with affection and joy ... And there is a spirit here that comes from the privilege of living in this world by being bound to it: it is a kind of freedom."

--Maurice Manning, author of Bucolics

THORPE MOECKEL teaches at Hollins University and lives with his family near Buchanan, VA.

6 x 9 | 208 pp | US $17.00 | 978-0-9897532-5-8

The Other Sky

Poetry

BRUCE BOND/ARON WIESENFELD

Available April 2015

In dialogue between poetry and visual art, The Other Sky probes the depths of the psyche: childhood roots, reveries, tensions. We find visual art and poems that respond, not as mere descriptions, but as speculative and emotional explorations, incantations, forces of resistance even, driven by strengths particular to poems. This book is unique by virtue of the power, virtuosity, and refinement of its images and the ways the poems work closely with them to create a symbiosis that is larger than either medium alone.

“This book is one of the finest of its kind.”

--Stephen Dunn

BRUCE BOND (poet) is the author of nine previous books of poetry: Choir of the Wells; A Timology (Etruscan, 2013), The Visible (LSU, 2012), Paul (Etruscan, 2009), and Blind Rain (LSU, 2008). Aron ARON WIESENFELD’S drawings and paintings have been in five solo shows, including a retrospective at the Bakersfield Museum of Art in 2010. His work has been in numerous group exhibitions in the U.S. and Europe.

7.25 x 9 | 104 pp | US $30.00 | 978-0-9897532-6-5

Cannot Stay: Essays on Travel

Travel Essays

KEVIN ODERMAN

Available June 2015

Kevin Oderman proves himself as one of our most interesting and original travel writers. In these dozen essays, he journeys from the Baltics to Lahore, Pakistan, from the arid Turkish and Greek coastlines to the tropical humidity of Southeast Asia, from familiar tourist haunts like Florence to the spooky otherworld of Corsica, from Bali to Nepal, and even, incredibly, on imagined voyages to Mali and Mexico. His prose style is both exacting and lyrical, visually alive and philosophically astute.

"Cannot Stay fuses remarkable places to remarkable observations to remarkable language without ceasing, demonstrating that travel, at its best, is a contemplative tool as valid as any church, yogic exercise, or zafu."

--David James Duncan

KEVIN ODERMAN lives in Morgantown, West Virginia with his wife, Sara Pritchard.

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Body of a Dancer
Renée E. D’Aoust
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American Anger: An Evidentiary
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H. L. Hix
Available January 2016
American Anger reads history and foreign policy through psychological and philosophical anger theories. This collection of poetry brings to light evidence of the anger at work in American civil life. By reflecting America back onto itself, these poems speak to the demographics that have been engaged by the Occupy movement, recognizing anger as a condition of American life and policy.

“Hix has written the most important poetic sequences published by an American poet during the last several decades.”

--David Caplan, contributing editor, Pireades

H. L. HIX, author of twenty-seven books, lives with the poet, Kate Northrop, in the mountain west, in an 1880’s railroad house, writing in a studio that was once a barn.

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--John H. Wilson, editor, Evelyn Waugh Studies

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What is your writing process like? Perhaps a line will come to me, just a line out of nowhere—and there will be a certain kind of ring or whatever I call a snap to it, and that’s the signal that maybe I better play real attention and see what comes. It’s all intuitive, of course. Most days I’ll sit down with my notebook. Sometimes I’ll look at drafts and mess around with revisions, but sometimes there will be an expectant feeling. That’s the only way I can describe it. Then, maybe a line comes, sometimes followed by several lines, and then the poem starts to take shape. Once you have a sense of the whole poem, then you begin to revise and refine, trying to get at what I call the essential news of the poem. You have to get to the thing that demanded an audience, that shouted inside you. That can take anywhere from a few weeks to a few months or even years—if it’s a poem that’s longer and more complex. Sometimes you end up working through layers and layers of language, and the opening line that felt so promising ends up being discarded, and you realize that it was just a trigger. So, for me the process is primarily one of patience and focus, listening as carefully as possible and not settling for what seems pretty good. There’s a certain point, for me at least, where the thing that drove the poem into being makes itself known. That’s what I wait for. That’s how most of the poems I write come into being.

Do you have to do anything to check that process of going away and coming back to a poem? To keep yourself producing and moving forward? At this stage in my life, I have so many drafts of different things that if I’m not creating a new poem, there’s always a draft to re-examine. I’m rarely faced with deadlines as a poet. It’s a great luxury, but I usually get to work on a poem as long as I need to. I was looking at a poem that I finished earlier this year, for example. I was referring to myself in the poem as being 56, but I was finishing the poem at 58. I didn’t realize it had been a two-year process. I don’t need much external motivation; I’m always writing.

How do you know when a collection is complete? Do you get a feeling similar to when you finish a poem? Sometimes I’ll look at drafts and mess around with revisions, but sometimes I’ll have a feeling that there’s enough here to get a feeling similar to when you finish a poem? How do you know when a collection is complete? Do you have to do anything to check that process of going away and coming back to a poem? To keep yourself producing and moving forward? At what point did you decide that Fast Animal would be the title, and how did that decision come to be? At what point did you decide that Fast Animal would be the title, and how did that decision come to be? I’ll look at poems and if a line or phrase jumps out that seems to capture some essential thing about the book—like Fast Animal, came from the line “consciousness turned like a fast animal to the blood on my face.” Out of context it probably sounds like the ranting of a maniac, but this entire book is about memory and consciousness and the movements thereof. So, I thought, “That’s it.” Consciousness is an animal that moves around, and it is, in its way, very hungry and agile. I also like titles that make people stop and think. “Fast Animal? What fast animal?” I want the title to be intriguing. And I liked the sound of Fast Animal. Generally, the title does come when the collection is finished or very close to being finished. Again, you’re relying on a certain intuitive feel for what you’ve written, and you just hope that your gut sense of the collection is right. There’s no truly rational way to write a poem or title a manuscript.

I go into a classroom late at night, and I put one poem on each desktop. Then I start walking up and down the rows, “That’ll be first. That’ll be second.” Then, of course, that may not be the right order, so you lay them all out again and do it over. Eventually, you come to a place where the order feels right. You might shuffle a poem here or there, but the essence of the collection, the basic chronology is in place. Then it’s just a matter—like with a poem—of simply refining the order so that it works as seamlessly as possible. Now, unfortunately, many people do not read books of poems chronologically. They skip around as though they think the poet put the poems together arbitrarily. No poet puts a book together arbitrarily—there is a reason that the poems are in a certain order—you’re trying to tell a particular story, poem by poem.

When you lay them out and walk between the desks, do you sometimes see a poem sticking out that you know is not going to be part of the collection? Yes. Before I finished Fast Animal, I did a series of hour very long persona poems in the voices of Frederick Douglass, John Brown, Frederick Douglass’s wife, and Douglass’s lover. They were each about five pages long. I did a lot of research to create what I hope was a convincing look at these historical figures, but it was very clear when I laid the poems out that they were not going to fit in Fast Animal. I would love to have them in a collection for a larger audience, but I think what I’m going to end up doing is publishing them as a chapbook, so that those poems will exist by themselves as a separate collection, because I don’t think they’ll fit in the next book, either. So there are poems that you know very quickly are not part of a collection. Even if you love a poem, if it doesn’t fit the flow of a collection, it has to be put aside.

Do you ever have the opposite experience? Feeling a gap, as if there’s a missing poem? If I do, I’ll go back and continue to write poems. If I’m putting together the chronology, and I feel there’s something missing I’ll just put the poems back in my notebook and keep writing. With Fast Animal, for example, I thought I had finished the book, and then I was in an airport and a line came to me; it hit me pretty hard. I started writing and realized this poem would be the closing poem of the collection.

How do you learn that you would be receiving the Roethke Prize? Well, I was looking through email on my computer at school, and I saw this thing. “Tim Seibles…Theodore Roethke Prize…” Of course, I saw that prize too seriously! I don’t know if I’m ever going to be a real guitarist, but I’m playing a lot!
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The Etruscan Press Educational Outreach Program continues to pair acclaimed authors with underserved students in area high schools, working to increase the literacy of students and offering a general appreciation for the literary arts.

The program goals include the following:

• Expand cultural and literary awareness throughout Northeast Ohio and Northeast Pennsylvania

• Demonstrate a love of literature to young people

• Promote intercultural acceptance and understanding

• Prepare underserved students for success in college

• Plant Little Free Libraries, which aim to bring Youngstown and Wilkes-Barre communities together through music and literature

• Continue to build alliances with community business partners to promote literacy, the love of reading, and enrich local neighborhoods
Bonnie Friedman, a Bronx native and University of North Texas creative writing professor, reflects on her life through a series of deeply contemplative, sometimes heart-rending essays in her latest book, *Surrendering Oz*. This collection of essays, while largely intended as a means to share Friedman's introspective thoughts on poignant moments in her life, is also something of a coming of age story. In *Surrendering Oz*, the reader witnesses Friedman's growth as a person through the acceptance of the validity of her own life experiences.

"I was amazed the first time she [Dorothy] gets sent home by the carnie man who tells her that Auntie Em is collapsing on the bed." Friedman began to understand the lesson of this story: Dorothy should not leave home. She is given the message that if she leaves, those she loves will suffer. "This is in direct contrast to stories with male protagonists, which causes Friedman to ponder. "Boys are not told the people you love will die if you leave home. If anything, boys are guilt-tripped into leaving home, to go out into the world." Using Shakespeare's *Hamlet* as an example, Friedman explains that it is a play about a man who causes tragedy because he does not choose to correct what is wrong in the world, as men are supposed to do, or as she puts it, "take responsibility for the woes of the world." By that logic, it is Hamlet's blundering inaction that is at fault for the myriad deaths at the end of the play.

The obvious counter to that, for Friedman, is the story of *The Wizard of Oz*: Dorothy is told that her leaving home has imperiled the life of Aunt Em. The young man must take action in the world or the world sickness. Girls are taught the opposite: their leaving home threatens the well-being of those they love.

What Friedman is trying to imply is not just that women are discouraged from venturing out into the world, but that the stories we ingest culturally shape us as individuals. Using her teaching experience as an example Friedman explains, "When you teach long enough, you realize an individual feels so idiosyncratic, so sui-generis, but we are all affected by our class, our particular family histories, and myriad other factors we don't notice if we're not looking for a pattern. And then people blame themselves!"

So, what real world application does the phrase “Surrendering Oz” carry? Friedman says that, for her, it means “surrendering the fantasy” of how life is supposed to be so that one can have authority in one's real life. In short, to "surrender Oz" is to delineate between fiction and fantasy, to acknowledge the hard but real truths of the world so that one can make real-world changes.

The book's title essay "Surrendering Oz" is enough to accept the validity of her own life experiences. It is obvious that *Surrendering Oz* contains intelligent, insightful observations about our society, the personal reflections of Friedman are just as powerful. In fact, while reading *Surrendering Oz*, one cannot help but feel as if the author has had quite some time to reflect on the significance of the events in her book. Friedman explains that the essays in it were indeed composed over a considerable amount of time: "I wrote them over many years and I didn't visualize them coming together until quite late in writing them. When writing separate essays I felt like I did need to come to some sort of conclusion in each. I wanted to press each of the events that I was writing about to yield something of significance. I write in order to make sense of my life. I don't know what things mean until I write about them. For each essay, I did want to write from those experiences something I and others could grow from. In the act of writing you can glean something from daily life that you can carry with you. I wanted my experiences to add up to something. Only later did I have the pleasure of putting the different essays together ..."

Friedman agreed that distance has contributed greatly to the emotional depth of her work. "I was a very different person over the course of writing those essays because it took me so many years. I was in a different frame of mind by the end. The act of pulling these essays together into a cogent narrative allowed me an expanded perspective."

When she set out to write each one, she used the writing as her personal exploration of events. "I want to know something by the end of an essay that I didn't know at the beginning. What is the understanding that I didn't have words for at the beginning?"

It is obvious that *Surrendering Oz* has been expertly and even lovingly developed. Friedman's words speak with a sense of wisdom that implies a great deal of reflection on the events she writes about. "When I read the essays through, I remember where I was sitting when I wrote them. I remember sitting at a little desk in a window in Brooklyn," Friedman says. She selects each word with the meticulousness of language as that of a poet. "I wrote them slowly, and my way of writing is more akin to a poet's way of writing than a novelist's. I did want to saturaate them with significance the way that a poet does."

Friedman currently spends her time in Brooklyn, NY, or teaching in Texas. She talks of her students lovingly, as excited about their potential as a proud parent. Friedman travels back and forth between the two locations while caring for her two—one potentially oversized—cats. She is always writing and sharing her knowledge of the writing craft. Friedman continues to lecture on how to create a book out of a series of disparate essays—a topic she is more than qualified to speak on. Her labor of love, *Surrendering Oz*, was released in November 2014.
Accomplished writer NIN ANDREWS has supported Etruscan from the start. Through her generous donations and creative contributions, Nin has helped connect Etruscan Press to a larger writing community and spread Etruscan’s mission. She’s hosted events, read alongside Etruscan authors, increased our presence in the Youngstown community, and served as guest poetry editor. Nin introduced us to poet Tim Seibles, whose poetry collection Fast Animal was released by Etruscan in 2011. Fast Animal was nominated for a National Book Award and received the PEN Oakland Josephine Miles Award as well as the triennial Theodore Roethke Memorial Poetry Prize.

As the award-winning author of several books, Nin’s support of poetry and literature comes as no surprise. “I think people are made up of stories. We are formed and informed by these stories, connected by these stories, uplifted or saddened by these stories. Literature, whether it is poetry, fiction, or nonfiction, is, in my opinion, an outpouring of our stories, and of our essential nature.” She believes one of the main achievements of Etruscan Press is the pleasure our books provide for readers.

Nin extends her philanthropic efforts to environmental projects in Youngstown. From her expertise in poetry to her community mindset and spirit, Nin’s contributions to Etruscan are immeasurable.

BONNIE CULVER’S contributions to Etruscan include an instrumental role in helping the press find a home at Wilkes University, an affiliation that continues to this day. Bonnie has also served on the advisory board for Etruscan since its inception. Bonnie is a professor and former dean at Wilkes as well as an award-winning author and playwright. Her twenty-plus plays have been produced from NY to LA by colleges, regional theatres, and equity companies. Sniper won the New Jersey Arts Council Perry Award for Excellence in the Production of an Original Play followed by a first class equity showcase at Center Stage, NYC, in 2005. In 2006, Sniper was included in the Florida Studio Theatre's Richard and Betty Burdick National Playwriting Reading series. Three of her screenplays were finalists in the Sundance Film Development program. Marlee Matlin’s Solo One Production company optioned Rainbow Man. Last year three of her one-acts plays were produced in Virginia. She is the director/co-founder of the Wilkes low-residency M.A./M.F.A. programs, a member of the Dramatists Guild, the Author’s League of America, the National Council of Teachers of English, and the Association for Theatre in Higher Education and president of the Association of Writers and Writing Programs’ national board of trustees.
Etruscan Press

2014 Highlights

- Named one of five finalists for the 2015 Small Press Publisher Award by the Association of Writers and Writing Programs
- Remica Bingham’s What We Ask of Flesh named finalist for Hurston/Wright Legacy Award in Poetry
- Diane Raptosh’s American Amnesiac named finalist for Housatonic Book Award in Poetry
- Tim Seibles’ Fast Animal (2012 NBA Finalist and 2013 PEN Oakland Josephine Miles Award winner) honored with the triennial Theodore Roethke Memorial Poetry Prize
- Etruscan Prize awarded to Ahrend Torrey of Baton Rouge, LA for his poem Trophic Cascade (judged by Etruscan author Remica Bingham)
- Two Little Free Libraries planted at community centers in Youngstown, OH
- Continued Outreach Program in partnership with Youngstown State University Poetry Center featuring East High Early College, Choffin Career Center, Park Vista Retirement Home, and the YSU Incarcerated Student Program
- Executive Director Phillip Brady wins Ohio Governor’s Award in Arts Education

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--Walt Whitman

Nothing attested, everything sung, writes Etruscan poet H. L. Hix, echoing Walt. Since our first release, September 11, 2001: American Writers Respond, Etruscan writers have sung a resonant chorus of poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, and literary criticism.

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