2016 RELEASES

etruscan press
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A Note From the Executive Director . . .

One of the great things about an independent press is that it’s, well, independent. There are no star chambers or provosts or apparatchiks or page counters. At Etruscan, we’re as likely to sight a UFO as a CFO. Our 2016 titles certainly take liberties. David Lazar’s eerie and hilarious Who’s Afraid of Helen of Troy defies classification if not description—are they prose poems? Micro-fiction? Redactions of ancient comedy skits? And Meg Pokrass’ The Dog Looks Happy Upside Down is no less slippery; the flashiest of flash fiction. In A Heaven Wrought of Iron, David Spitzer channels his inner Homer and offers an original approach to epic poetry. What a delight to welcome these pyrotechnicians to our fireworks.

Our Fall season features three veteran, not to say venerable, Etruscans, each a past National Book Award nominee. William Heyen collects a half-century of meditation on the Holocaust in his biggest book yet, The Candle. Diane Raptosh follows the success of American Amnesiac with another energized and nuanced screed, Human Directional, and Tim Seibles’ One Turn Around the Sun presents a moving meditation on the passing of time.

2015 saw us named one of the top five presses in the country by AWP. There were awards from PEN and CLMP and an Ohio Governor’s Award in Arts Education. Our Outreach Program touched new readers in high schools, prisons, retirement homes and community centers. 2016 promises more unpredictable engagements. We pledge our unallegiance.

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Cover painting: The Art of Reading by Samuel Bak (image courtesy of Pucker-Gallery--Private Collection)
Catalog design: Nicole Kutos
Poetry
DAVID LAZAR
Available April 2016

In Who’s Afraid of Helen of Troy, David Lazar extends the language of prose poetry, mixing the classical and the high modern, the song and dance man and the Odyssean. Nothing, he finds, is as far apart as we think, except for chaos and order, innocence and experience. Lazar’s voice is a sacred last resort: something’s gotta give.

“In the wild ride that comprises Lazar’s lively, surreal prose poems, ancient scenes and myths mate with contemporary manners and slang. These are vibrant poems of love, romantic complication, manners and morals and ageless longing.”

--Amy Gerstler, author of Dearest Creature

David Lazar’s books include essays, prose poetry, nonfiction anthologies, and interview collections. Lazar lives in Chicago, Illinois.

The Dog Looks Happy Upside Down
Flash Fiction
MEG POKRASS
Available June 2016

This collection of tiny, intimate truffles is as powerful as soul-chocolate infused with caffeine. Each story contains bite-sized glimpses into the lives of everyday people, leaving readers with the long and lasting effects of a full-length novel. Each chapter dives into relevant life events that require further contemplation. These 50 stories reveal the dark truth and reality of the world.

Meg Pokrass gets a lot done in the shortest spaces imaginable, whole worlds in a handful of words, a teeming city of characters arising from mere paragraphs, Fifty stories that just won’t quit. With The Dog Looks Happy Upside Down, flash fiction comes of age.”

--Bill Roorbach, author of The Remedy for Love

Meg Pokrass is a leading American writer of the flash fiction form. She is the author of four previous flash fiction collections. Pokrass lives in San Francisco, California.
Poetry

D. M. SPITZER
Available July 2016

D. M. Spitzer’s collection unfolds a poetic engagement with the Greek Odyssey within the framework of the ancient epic: 24 books and a well-known and complex narrative architecture. The poems contained in A Heaven Wrought of Iron inhabit a range of voices and perspectives drawn from both the world of Homer’s Odyssey and from that of the poet-as-reader.

“Spitzer’s voice is one that, like the center figure of nesting dolls, finds itself enclosed in larger voices—the air a voice, the sky a voice, and the heavens, too. It is and isn’t one's own, such work, such poems, such making.” --Dan Beachy-Quick, author of Circle's Apprentice

After pursuing graduate studies in political thought, philosophy, and classics, D. M. Spitzer completed a Master of Fine Arts in Writing at Vermont College of Fine Arts. Spitzer resides in Harrisburg, PA with his wife and their three children.

6 x 9 | 176 pp | US $15.00 | 978-0-9903221-3-9

Poetry

DIANE RAPTOSH
Available September 2016

Human Directional angles with cautious hope toward “the space of the thinkable,” celebrating body/beauty, justice and decency, difference and community. With the deadly precision of the fey, Human Directional reveals the heartbreak and absurdity of our world by exploring—and often exploding—its most sacred memes.

“Human Directional is a clear indication of Raptosh’s infinite capacity to surprise. Subverting conventions and expectations, she plays with logic as gracefully as a rhythmic gymnast plays with a baton. She is at once a poet, a philosopher, and an entertainer. I come away seeing the world in an entirely new way.” --Nin Andrews, author of Why God Is a Woman

Diane Raptosh’s fourth book of poetry, American Amnesiac (Etruscan Press), was longlisted for the 2013 National Book Award. Raptosh teaches literature and creative writing at The College of Idaho. She lives with her family in Boise, Idaho.

6 x 9 | 88 pp | US $16.00 | 978-0-9903221-6-0
The Candle: New and Selected Poems

Poetry

WILLIAM HEYEN

Available October 2016

The Candle is the record, unlike any other in our literature, of an American poet’s staring into the central atrocities of our Twentieth Century, of his struggle against soul-sickness as he attempts, over almost 50 years, by way of despised and barbaric poetry (in Theodor Adorno’s terms), to find ways to realize (make real), to understand, to remember.

“No other American poet has thought more deeply about the Holocaust than William Heyen, and no other American poet has produced such a searing and distinguished body of Holocaust poems. This compelling collection, drawing together the work of 45 years, will be a tremendous resource for those of us who know his work well and a perfect way to introduce new generations of readers to the most devastating legacy of modern history.” — Cary Nelson, editor of Anthology of Modern American Poetry (Oxford, 2014)

6 x 9 | 352 pp | US $16.00 | 978-0-9903221-7-7

One Turn Around the Sun

Poetry

TIM SEIBLES

Available January 2017

One Turn Around The Sun is a panorama of poems that attempt to define the twilight during which a person becomes caretaker of parents and begins to grind against that old saying, “Life is too short.” The book also studies the intricacies of being a self, a particular personality shaped by forces seen and unseen, both knowable and not. At times, the various voices might be considered characters that agree and sustain one perspective. In other cases, contending sensibilities imply an underlying argument.

This is especially true of the book within the book, which is entitled “The Hilt.”

This poetry collection is driven by several questions, the most central being how can a person stay sane when so often socio-political circumstances mock all efforts to create a livable world. This is a book intended to bolster an ongoing engagement with life at a time when running away is a great temptation.

6 x 9 | 100 pp | US $16.00 | 978-0-9903221-8-4
**Complete Backlist**

**American Amnesiac**
Diane Raptosh
The manic journey of a man stripped of memory confronts the complexities of being American in an age of corruption, corporations, and global conflict.

Poetry, 96 pages, trade paper
$16.00 (978-0-9839346-6-0)

**American Fugue**
Alexis Stamatis
This literary thriller follows the odyssey of a Greek writer traveling a strange and compelling landscape, where he re-discovers America—and himself.

Fiction, 353 pages, trade paper
$16.95 (978-0-9797450-2-7)

**American Anger: An Evidentiary**
H. L. Hix
More than an expressive book of poems, this work is an evidentiary reflection of civility and self-correction born from the poet’s own philosophical research.

Poetry, 215 pages, trade paper
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**An Archaeology of Yearning**
Bruce Mills
Mill’s remarkable memoir maps the artifacts of the life of a father and his autistic son, as they learn the depth of relationships.

Memoir, 232 pages, trade paper
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**Arcadia Road: A Trilogy**
Thorpe Moeckel
Consisting of three long poems—narrative, lyrical, meditative—Moeckel’s poetry os each audacious as down-to-earth, and strange as intimate.

Poetry, 208 pages, trade paper
$17.00 (978-0-09897532-5-8)

**The Arsonist’s Song Has Nothing to Do With Fire**
Allison Titus
This highly compressed prose poem of a novel explores the loneliness of three misfits—a wallflower, an arsonist, and a doctor—as they attempt to reconnect to the modern world.

Fiction, 244 pages, trade paper
US $15.00, CAN $16.50 (978-0-9886922-5-1)
**eBook** $9.99 (978-0-9886922-7-5)

**Art Into Life**
Frederick R. Karl
Art Into Life collects essays on biography by one of the twentieth century’s most distinguished biographers, Frederick R. Karl.

Literary Criticism, 295 pages, hardcover
$29.95 (978-0-9745995-3-3)

**As Easy As Lying**
Essays on Poetry
H. L. Hix
Accessible and ebullient, these essays delve into the workings of the poetic mind and offer keen assessments of contemporary American poets and poetics.

Literary Criticism, 148 pages, trade paper
$17.95 (978-0-9718228-3-2)

**The National Book Award Longlist**

**AN ACHIEVEMENT OF YEARING**
Bruce Mills
Mill’s remarkable memoir maps the artifacts of the life of a father and his autistic son, as they learn the depth of relationships.

Memoir, 232 pages, trade paper
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Literary Criticism, 148 pages, trade paper
$17.95 (978-0-9718228-3-2)
As Much As, If Not More Than
H. L. Hix

As Much As is an intellectual venture, testing the boundary between poetry and prose.

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Renée E. D’Aoust

Body of a Dancer provides a powerful, acidly comic record of what it is to love, and eventually leave, a life centered on dance.

Memoir, 154 pages, trade paper
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In this book of voices, speakers resurrected from the deeper past and the dead chafe against the circumstances of love, sex, loss, and longing.

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Choir of the Wells
Bruce Bond

Choir of the Wells is a tetralogy that coheres as a singular exploration of the mind-body problem grounded in daily heartbreak, wonder, novelty, and compulsion.

Poetry, 232 pages, trade paper
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The Burning House
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The Burning House finds its narrator at his most vulnerable, and explores what it means to be a good man amidst chaos.

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H. L. Hix

Chromatic examines the effects of human desire and explores the full range of effects caused by human emotion.

Poetry, 69 pages, trade paper
$15.95 (978-0-9745995-6-4)

Cannot Stay: Essays on Travel
Kevin Oderman

These dozen essays explore Oderman’s journeys from arid lands to tropical and spooky destinations.

Essays, 238 pages, trade paper
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Cinder
Bruce Bond

With the luminous precision of music, Bruce Bond has crafted a generous and urgent collection of poems, a work that celebrates the human condition and terrifies us with it in equal measure.

Poetry, 66 pages, trade paper
$14.95 (978-0-9718228-5-6)
**The Confessions of Doc Williams and Other Poems**  
William Heyen  
The “urgency and authenticity” and the “plain directness” of Heyen’s voice ring true in this collection, Heyen’s eighteenth volume of poetry.

Poetry, 74 pages, trade paper  
$15.95 (978-0-9745995-5-7)

**The Disappearance of Seth**  
Kazim Ali  
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$16.95 (978-0-9797450-8-9)

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Claire Bateman  
Through a variety of questions both overt and embedded, the poems in this collection explore the inexplicable too-muchness/not-enoughness of imaginative experience.

Poetry, 71 pages, trade paper  
$17.95 (978-0-9819687-5-9)

**Crave: Sojourn of a Hungry Soul**  
Laurie Jean Cannady  
This coming-of-age memoir chronicles a young girl’s journey through abuse and impoverishment.

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Tom Bailey  
These eleven quintessentially American stories fully demonstrate our unstinting capacity for love and loss.

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**Fast Animal**  
Tim Seibles  
Fast Animal plots the movement from innocence to awareness, and what happens to each of us as we bounce off the various obstacles life places between us and our fulfillment.

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*William Heyen*

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*A Political/Poetic Discourse*
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**Free Concert**
*New and Selected Poems*
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Kessler left behind new work that celebrates the life and work of a gifted poet of original voice, presenting work from each of his books together with his new poems.

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**I’m here to learn to dream in your language**
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eBook $15.00 (978-0-9897532-0-3)
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Hix’s lyric poetry invites emotional connection to artist Petra Soesemann who embraces a newly discovered life, one made “instantly mythical” by a startling revelation.

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**Legible Heavens**

H. L. Hix

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**Lies Will Take You Somewhere**

Sheila Schwartz

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H. L. Hix

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Peter Grandbois

Nabookara opens an oneiric space of wonder, one that exists both within the natural world and within our own minds, a place outside preconceived notions of reality and identity, a place where we are free to re-imagine ourselves.

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eBook $16.95 (978-0-9839346-8-4)

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Bruce Bond/Aron Wiesenfeld

Through a dialogue between poetry and visual art, this title probes the depths of the psyche: childhood roots, reveries, tensions.

Poetry, 104 pages, trade paper
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**Parallel Lives**

Michael Lind

Lind’s range of experience that goes beyond the purely academic or literary and into the realm of domestic and foreign policy is reflected in this collection.

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**Peal**  
Bruce Bond  
In *Peal*, the reader is led to discover a sustained exploration of mortality and its embodiment in the consolations of beauty as the poet shapes language for the powers of renewal, faith, and the imagination.  
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William Heyen  
*A Poetics of Hiroshima* is a collection of poems and prose pieces firmly rooted in history, exposing the conflict between obscenity and song, atrocity and beauty, and their eventual moral fusion.  
Poetry, 77 pages, trade paper  
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**Saint Joe’s Passion**  
J.D. Schraffenberger  
The poems of *Saint Joe’s Passion* recount the lonely, lecherous life of Joseph Johnstone, painting the portrait of a man who was never quite able to open himself up to genuine love and intimacy.  
Poetry, 62 pages, trade paper  
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**Scything Grace**  
Sean Thomas Dougherty  
Through the still industrial Midwest, Dougherty offers us the stories he has lived and collected of men and women still going on, even if unsure.  
Poetry, 88 pages, trade paper  
$16.00 (978-0-9886922-0-6)

**September 11, 2001 American Writers Respond**  
Edited by William Heyen  
In *September 11, 2001, American Writers Respond*, more than 125 fiction writers, poets, and essayists are seized in ways that often surprise themselves.  
Literary Criticism, 419 pages, paperback  
$19.00 (978-0-9718228-0-1)

**Quick Kills**  
Lynn Lurie  
*Quick Kills* chronicles the desperate longing to belong as well as the effects of neglect, familial absence, and the nature of secrets. The young female narrator’s disquiet escalates after she agrees to be the subject of an older man’s photographs.  
Fiction, 135 pages, trade paper  
US $14.00, CAN $15.50 (978-0-9886922-8-2)  
eBook $9.99 (978-0-9886922-9-9)

**Shadows of Houses**  
H. L. Hix  
Patiently looking at and through the quotidian, H. L. Hix registers the tiny and immense phenomena of change and variation the seasons and hours bring.  
Poetry, 80 pages, trade paper  
$15.95 (978-0-9745995-4-0)
**Shoah Train**

*William Heyen*

*Shoah Train* collects more than seventy lyrics of “discipline and honesty and courage and restraint,” as Archibald MacLeish described *The Swastika Poems.*

Poetry, 78 pages, trade paper
$15.95 (978-0-9718228-7-0)

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**The Shyster’s Daughter**

*Paula Priamos*

This searing, detective noir memoir paints a vivid portrait of a Greek American family caught up in the scandal-obsessed, drug-addicted culture of California in the late 1980s.

Memoir, 250 pp, trade paper
$16.00 (978-0-9832944-3-6)

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**So Late, So Soon**

*New and Selected Poems*

*Carol Moldaw*

Out of acutely observed, deeply felt particulars, Carol Moldaw constructs poetry of imaginative daring that illuminates and transforms the life within us all.

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**Surrendering Oz**

*Bonnie Friedman*

This memoir in essays charts the emotional awakening of a bookish Bronx girl from her early job as a proofreader at *The Guinness Book of World Records* through a series of dominating and liberating friendships and secret connections.

Essays, 241 pages, trade paper
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**Toucans in the Arctic**

*Scott Coffel*

In this lyric case study of tumult and tranquility, the dominant voice is of a man both enthralled and appalled by the vast national park of the psyche as he scrambles across its eerie landscapes of identity and marriage.

Poetry, 64 pages, trade paper
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**The Subtle Bodies**

*James McCorkle*

*The Subtle Bodies* moves between lush landscapes and the violence imposed by humans upon the land, making contact with the world as it ebbs into a digitized silence.

Poetry, 82 pages, trade paper
US $16.00, CAN $17.50 (978-0-9886922-3-7)

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**Venison**

*Thorpe Moeckel*

The process of a family working up a deer in their shed and then kitchen serves as both focus and departure for this book-length poem. At stake are no less than the origins and mysteries of flesh and touch—food.

Poetry, 66 pages, trade paper
$17.95 (978-0-9819687-1-1)
**What We Ask of Flesh**  
Remica L. Bingham  
Through biblical re-tellings, narratives, and lyric poems, this young African-American poet examines and heals wounds of flesh and spirit.  
Poetry, 72 pages, trade paper  
$14.00 (978-0-9839346-2-2)

**The White Horse**  
Diane Thiel  
Diane Thiel’s writing beckons us deeper into the heart of nature, reawakens our consciousness of the South American forest, and evokes the spirit of adventure.  
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**White Vespa**  
Kevin Oderman  
Does art clarify or obscure love? With a photographic eye, Kevin Oderman probes family secrets on an exotic island.  
Fiction, 280 pages, trade paper  
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**The Widening**  
Carol Moldaw  
By turns picaresque, dark, and edgily erotic, *The Widening* is a poetic novel, presenting a portrait of a young woman’s volatile mix of passivity and wildness.  
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**Wild and Whirling Words A Poetic Conversation**  
Moderated by H. L. Hix  
Thirty-three of America’s best poets each volunteered one of his or her own poems, which the moderator then circulated anonymously among the other poets, who then responded for this collection.  
Literary Criticism, 201 pages, trade paper  
$22.95 (978-0-9745995-0-2)

**YOU.**  
Joseph P. Wood  
*YOU.* is the ultimate relationship poem: husband and wife, father and daughter, addict and rehab, self and god.  
Poetry, 110 pages, trade paper  
$16.00 (978-0-9897532-3-4)

**Zarathustra Must Die**  
Dorian Alexander  
In *Zarathustra Must Die*, sex, drugs, and rock ’n’ roll meet Nietzsche’s concept of eternal recurrence in a wild exploration of the nature of time and its relationship to our existence.  
Fiction, 106 pages, trade paper  
$11.00 (978-0-9832944-4-3)
Interview with Laurie Jean Cannady
by Sam Chiarelli

“It was an awakening for me,” Laurie Jean Cannady says, describing the process of writing her debut memoir, *Crave: Sojourn of a Hungry Soul*.

Cannady began writing as far back as she can remember. In her childhood, she wrote stories, poems, and plays. As an adult, she knew she would have to write a memoir.

“I was really called to writing because I thought of the young women and young men who grew up where I grew up, or who grew up in similar situations to the one that I grew up in,” Cannady says. “I just kept thinking that our voices need to be out there. They need to be heard. People need to understand what it’s like to live in a world where oftentimes you’re marginalized, and people will really negate your voice.”

Cannady’s lyrical voice is the one she uses in everyday speech. She says honing one’s voice is critical.

“I think it’s very important for writers to read aloud what they’ve written, and also get others to read it to them,” she says. “You hear where they pause and where they stop.”

Cannady believes that writing workshops and writing groups are invaluable resources, but family can also play a big role.

“My husband was forced to listen to me read it aloud,” Cannady jokes. “Sometimes he would read it aloud. And my son is also a writer, so he was very helpful, too.”

Cannady wrote *Crave* one page at a time, typing at least one page every day. Sometimes she wrote more, but she would not allow herself to go about her business without finishing her daily session. This morning ritual allowed her to have a life outside writing, while not allowing herself to procrastinate or become upset for not writing enough.

According to Cannady, a revision is a major undertaking. She says she used to do simple line editing, but that isn’t enough to prepare a manuscript for publication.

“When I first wrote his part, he was just a monster. And the reader would say, ‘why would you date this monster?’ But when I allowed the reader to be introduced to him the way that I was introduced to him, when I allowed the reader to see him the way that others saw him, and even in the way that he saw himself, I felt like he came to life for me, and even I understood him better.”

Sanford is emblematic of the young men who dated Cannady and tried to help her, but made things worse because they, themselves, were so broken.

Cannady says the biggest obstacle she faced was feeling one page a day may produce plenty of material she’ll never use, but Cannady finds gems within the work.

“I look for those lines that string together, that allow me to see the whole piece a little better,” she says.

This selectivity allows Cannady to feel removed from the pressure of making every one of her sentences perfect as she writes. Once she finds the heart of the piece, Cannady re-writes the entire section.

As an example, Cannady describes her experience in reviewing one of the chapters in *Crave*, entitled “Never Tell.” She says she was distraught when she began revising.

“I had written most of that chapter in a stream of consciousness, but some of it just didn’t make sense. There was so much that I wanted to include, but it was just a big mess.”

When Cannady looked at the chapter again, she realized it read like a biography, chronicling each day of her relationship with a man named Sanford. Readers of memoirs don’t want to read objective biographies, Cannady says. Memoir, in her view, goes beyond biography, attempting to make sense of the past and letting the reader access deeper truths.

“The way I had written Sanford initially was very harsh because he had been harsh to me,” Cannady says. “But, of course, that wasn’t all of who he was. He was very funny. He was very likeable. No one would have believed that he was battering me behind closed doors because he kept up the façade of this perfect young man.”

Cannady says if she just retold the story as it happened to her, the reader wouldn’t have learned anything about abusive relationships. But when Cannady puts Sanford onstage in a theater production, in the same way that she originally saw him, she was able to convey more of who he was. One scene was worth more than dozens of pages about their relationship.

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Sanford is emblematic of the young men who dated Cannady and tried to help her, but made things worse because they, themselves, were so broken.
that she had the right to tell not only her story, but also the stories of the others in her book.

“My story is so intertwined with so many other people,” she says. “I’d be writing about someone and think, ‘oh, this person’s not gonna like this.’ I spent a lot of time thinking about how it might affect other people. And that was the stumbling block that not only affected me during the writing process, but during the revision process, and even during the process of sending my manuscript out.”

Cannady deliberated for a long time.

“I sat on the manuscript for over a year,” she says. “Because of the doubts, because of the fear.”

Cannady says she worried about how people would receive the book, including her family. But ultimately, she made the bold decision to share her story.

“You have to own your story and understand that it’s yours to tell. You have a right to tell it.”

Fears are usually overblown, she says.

“Most of the people that you write about won’t even read it,” Cannady says, “and even if they do read it, no matter what you wrote, they’re probably gonna say, ‘that’s not how it happened.’ Even if it’s something great.”

Cannady once read her mother a scene between the two. It was an emotionally charged scene that showed a connection between mother and daughter. Cannady thought her mother would enjoy being portrayed in a favorable light. When Cannady finished reading the piece, her mom’s response was unexpected.

“I didn’t make French fries that day,” her mother said. “They were potato logs.”

Everyone has a different version of the truth and will remember different things, Cannady says. While she was focused on the emotional content of the scene, her mother was focused on the potatoes.

“For memoirists, the people that are in the book are real people. They’re not just characters,” Cannady says. “But you have to write them as if they are a character. You have to look at them for all of their layers. You have to investigate who they are to you, but also how they may see themselves in the world, and how others may see them.”

Cannady says she learned a lot about this process in presenting her version of events.

“What I learned was that there were parts of my story that my mother had to protect herself from,” she says. “There were parts of my story that my sister and my brothers had to protect themselves from. When they said, ‘that’s not the way it happened,’ I couldn’t take it personally. I had to say, ‘okay, well that’s the way it happened for me.’”

Once Cannady accepted that her writing would never totally please everyone else, she focused on making herself happy with her work. In so doing, Cannady says she became stronger. Writing \textit{Crave} allowed her to discover a lot about herself.

“I learned a lot about who I was as a young girl, but I also learned a lot about what I was still carrying—the things that I thought I had put down, but that they were still with me, and they were very, very heavy. Writing actually allowed me to put some of that luggage down and to pick up new things.”

Cannady’s rejuvenated confidence helped her analyze decisions she made and the ways she interacted with people.

“It was definitely an awakening I can pass on to my children, and hopefully to the reader,” Cannady says.

\textit{Sam Chiarelli is completing an MFA in Creative Nonfiction at Wilkes University. He is working on his first full-length manuscript—an exploration of humanity’s fascination with dinosaurs.}
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Kevin Oderman’s *Cannot Stay: Essays on Travel* has beguiled readers since its release in July. Editorial associate Sam Chiarelli interviewed Kevin about how he brought this collection of essays to life.

**Q: What attracted you to travel writing?**
Travel appealed to me. And in this I am nothing if not common. Then, traveling, suffering the many difficulties, I began to wonder what was calling me to travel. That wondering is the source of my desire to write about travel.

Perhaps at the core, traveling disrupts our sense of time. Our lives fall into routines, and although routines slow time in the moment, when we look back at all that sameness, memory finds little to hold to. So, in memory, routine shortens our lives. In *Cannot Stay* I have tried to register this disruption of time, but also the ways in which the new of travel disrupts what we take as given, what our culture says is just so. Travel even a little and our cultural certainties begin to feel smug.

**Q: How do you develop a sense of journey for your reader?**
I tried to evoke the experience of the long flight overseas in the introduction to *Cannot Stay*. Most of my essays are written in vignettes, sometimes narrative, often not, but the links between the vignettes generally are not narrative. I hope the sense of being there is stronger than the sense of getting there.

**Q: What is the writing process like for you, turning experiences into essays?**
Experience is so chaotic, and traveling—the strangeness of the new place—makes it more so. So I try not to write too soon after a trip. I count on memory (or is it forgetting?) to sift through my experiences. I let memory be my first editor. I’m not at all confident that I can recognize what will stick with me in the flux of lived experience. Often images will rise out of memory with the force of dream, or myth, sometimes things I hardly noticed at the time. I like to work with these memories, the ones that stick and are perhaps burnished by being lifted out of their original context.

Then I’m finding patterns, making meaning. During the actual composition, this is most like listening. The material comes to me, accretes around a few images or relations or ideas. It grows. Then it’s all about shaping, structure, getting the language right.

**Q: You said memory is like an editor for you. Can you expand a little more on how memory affects your work?**
Often memory works by association, one memory calling up another, related memory. And it feels like there is already a pattern there to discover. Of course, the mind is busy and much of memory is random; it’s like listening to a song on the radio through a lot of static. Sometimes the song comes clear and possesses you. Sometimes it doesn’t. For instance, I have been haunted for years—almost twenty years—by a memory that has never found a place in a pattern of memories. Here it is: I was living in Pakistan, in Lahore. I was on the way home from a party. I had a car and a driver and I had dropped a friend off at home and headed out into surprisingly heavy traffic. It was around midnight. Stop and go. Six lanes. We came up alongside a trailer loaded with I-beams, which was being pulled by another trailer loaded the same. Light glaring on all that steel piled high up over our little yellow car. Then our lane opened up and we slipped forward. I was almost asleep and then astonished to see that the trailers were hitched to a wooden cart. A man in a white shalwar kamis stood in the cart sending his whip—I think he had a whip—over the six camels in harness that were pulling all that steel. Something about how the camels leaned into the weight of it, the traffic, the glaring light. Bright as hallucination, indelible. I’ve revisited that moment, or, better, it has visited me, untold times since that night. Far more often than anything else that happened to me during the many months I lived in Lahore. But it never wanted to connect to anything else and I never found a use for it. Well, not until now.

Sam Chiarelli writes Creative Nonfiction and resides in Pittston, Pennsylvania.
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