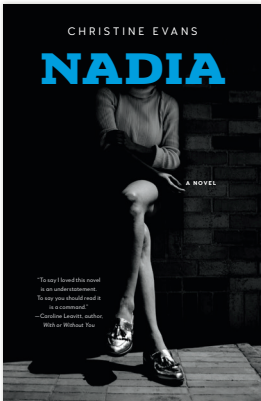
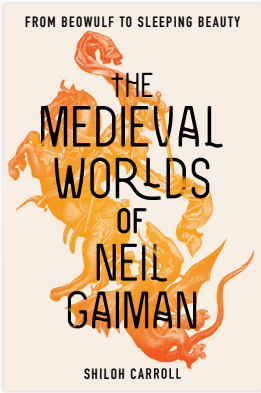




# Iowa

*Fall 2023*

**where great writing begins**



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# The Diver

by Samsun Knight

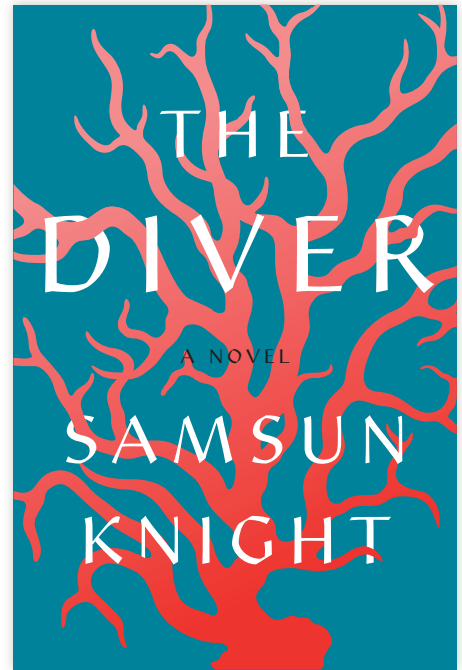
"*The Diver* is an astonishing novel, an eerie and compelling work of psychological suspense, a strange and startling plunge into the dark corners of a relationship. Samsun Knight is an incredibly gifted writer!"—Dan Chaon, author, *Sleepwalk*

MARTA DOESN'T MEAN TO kill her husband. In fact, she hardly believes that he's dead. After a grisly accident leaves him drowned at the bottom of Lake Michigan, she begins a frenzied journey into the occult that soon drags in everyone around her, from her mother-in-law to the private detectives parked outside her home, as she tries to dig herself free of her own deadly mistakes.

Peter is a young paralegal at the firm hired to investigate Marta's role in her husband's death, who is grappling with his own grief in the wake of his brother's suicide and the distance that seems to have opened between himself and his parents, his oldest friends, and the rest of the world. After learning about Marta's case, he becomes obsessed with her. On an outing when he's supposed to interview her neighbors, he instead knocks on Marta's door and warns her that a company of private detectives is preparing to make her life miserable. Marta slams the door on him, but later sets up a time to hear him out. Neither Marta nor Peter could predict the consequences of their meeting.

A story of grief, devotion, and unforgivable mistakes, *The Diver* explores the disasters that cannot be recovered from, the accidents that cannot be undone, and the risks of love.

**Samsun Knight** is a graduate of the Iowa Writers' Workshop. He is also an economist and assistant professor in the Rotman School of Management at the University of Toronto.



**NOVEMBER**

234 PAGES · 5 B&W IMAGES · 6 × 9 INCHES

\$19.00 PAPER ORIGINAL, 978-1-60938-927-7

\$19.00 E-BOOK, 978-1-60938-928-4

**FICTION**

# No Use Pretending

by Thomas A. Dodson

Iowa Short Fiction Award

“A story can contain multitudes, and an author too, as Thomas Dodson shows us over and over in this astonishingly varied collection. As at home in a bee yard as a Greek epic, he cannot but dazzle us with the enormity of his range, and yet he does not paint with broad strokes. Quite the contrary, he fills his stories with loving detail and quiet wisdom. *No Use Pretending* is a joy.”  
—Gish Jen, judge, Iowa Short Fiction Award

“I marveled at the range of emotions and voices—from beekeepers to drone pilots, an ancient Greek sailor to a hungry ghost—that Thomas Dodson is able to conjure in this terrific, capacious collection of short stories.”—Jess Walter, author, *The Angel of Rome: And Other Stories*

THE CHARACTERS IN THESE stories have been forced into conditions of life that they find unbearable, and the stories chart their often tragically misguided attempts to relieve their suffering via connections with other people or through the pursuit of addictive attachments (to opiates in one story, to sleep in another).

This collection encompasses diverse genres, from ecologically informed realism to a Kafkaesque fairy tale, from fabulist “weird fiction” to an episode from *The Odyssey* that becomes a meditation on what distinguishes human beings from animals. These stories invite the reader to reconsider moral and ideological certainties, to take a fresh look at such issues as fracking and drone warfare. In one story, a petroleum engineer discovers that one of his wastewater wells may be causing earthquakes, and in another the pilot of an Air Force drone seeks to reconcile his conflicting roles as protector and executioner, husband and soldier. The scientist and the serviceman are both presented with problems that have no easy or obvious solutions, situations that force them to confront the messy, compromising complexity of being human.

**Thomas A. Dodson** is assistant professor and librarian at Southern Oregon University. He lives in Ashville, Oregon.

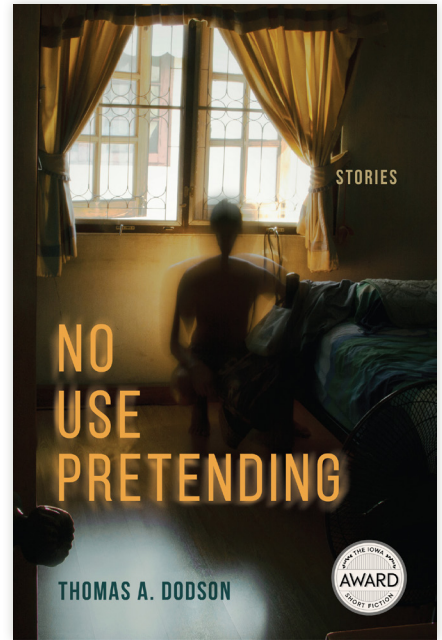
**OCTOBER**

182 PAGES • 5½ × 8¼ INCHES

\$19.00 PAPER ORIGINAL, 978-1-60938-917-8

\$19.00 E-BOOK, 978-1-60938-918-5

**FICTION**



“Thomas Dodson is a writer wonderfully aware of the resources of fiction and the necessities of the world. His vividly imagined characters seldom act in their own best interests. They keep bees, fly drones, lose loved ones, and in general suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. But Dodson never loses sight of their complicated humanity—he is too canny a writer for that—and of their desire for something larger. In the midst of darkness there are moments of light, grace, and accidental wisdom. *No Use Pretending* is an arresting and exhilarating debut.”—Margot Livesey

“Thomas Dodson’s inventive and beautifully crafted stories take us deep into the heart of the human dilemma: We dream—of an ideal world, an ideal way of living—we fall short, and then what? Dynamic, deeply visual, and with an extraordinary array of characters and settings, *No Use Pretending* immerses the reader in a captivating vision of hope, regret, and resilience. It leaves me meditating on some of its central questions: What principles should we use to organize society? What is the right way to live?”  
—Tom Drury, author, *Pacific*

# Nadia

by Christine Evans

“Shockingly original, stunningly written, *Nadia* is fierce, funny, and tragic, filled with encroaching dread about an ex-sniper and a young refugee who is so distinctive she should be patented. Like Emily St. John Mandel, the author plants us in a cryptic, dangerous new reality we never doubt for a second. To say I loved this novel is an understatement. To say you should read it is a command.”—Caroline Leavitt, author, *With or Without You*

*NADIA* MOVES BETWEEN THE competing perspectives of two survivors of the 1990s Balkan Wars who have escaped to London, only to discover that the war has followed them there. Nadia is a young refugee who just wants to forget the past—until Iggy starts temping at her London office. Afraid he may be a sniper from the war she fled, Nadia starts seeing threats everywhere, alongside unsettling visions of her lost girlfriend, Sanja.

As her volatile connection with Iggy unravels, Nadia is forced to face the shaky, ethical choices she made to escape the war, her survivor guilt, and her disavowed queer sexuality. *Nadia* takes us to the recent past of a war that broke apart a European country and that presciently foreshadowed the rise of ethno-nationalism in the West. Tense, suspenseful, and mordantly funny, *Nadia* tracks the complex ways in which a past marked by political violence can shadow and disrupt the present.

**Christine Evans** writes internationally produced plays, fiction, and opera libretti. Recent projects include *Three Marys*. Evans is a professor of performing arts at Georgetown University, and lives in Washington, D.C.

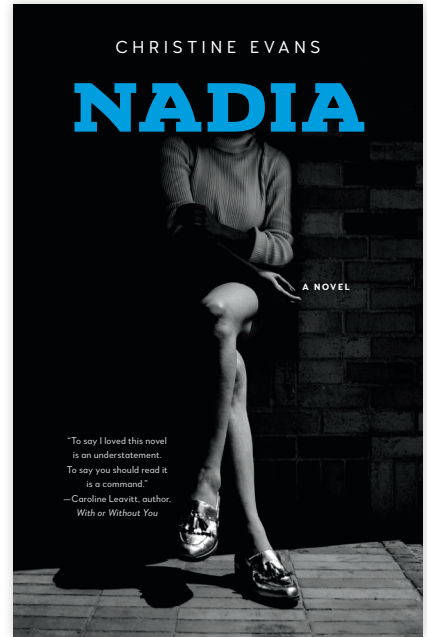
## SEPTEMBER

246 PAGES • 5½ × 8½ INCHES

\$19.00 PAPER ORIGINAL, 978-1-60938-909-3

\$19.00 E-BOOK, 978-1-60938-910-9

FICTION



“From its very first sentence, Christine Evans’s *Nadia* sweeps the reader up in a riveting tale of war, survival, love, and trauma. The story is set in London, just after the Balkan Wars, but is less about fighting than about the way any war forces those caught in it to face who they really are, what they believe, and what they will do about it. *Nadia* is immensely rewarding to read, touching both the intellect and the heart.”—Helen Benedict, author, *Wolf Season*

“Christine Evans writes with masterful restraint, achieving a literary debut that is both a page-turner and an exquisite rendering of queer resilience despite the specters of war. Like the quiet after a gunshot, the silences in *Nadia* crackle with threat. You won’t be able to put it down.”—Sarah Cypher, author, *The Skin and Its Girl*

# Bjarki, Not Bjarki

*On Floorboards, Love, and Irreconcilable Differences*

by Matthew J. C. Clark

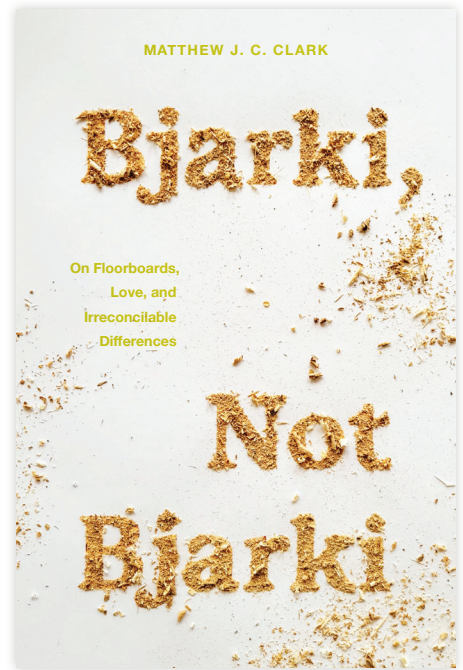
“YOU KNOW, I ACTUALLY think about that an awful lot, like, what is our purpose in life? Why am I here? I always think about some little kid being like, ‘What’d you do with your life?’ And me being like, ‘Well, I sold a bunch of floors.’”

These are the words of Bjarki Thor Gunnarsson, the young man who manufactures the widest, purest, most metaphorical pine floorboards on the planet. At least, that’s what Matthew Clark believes.

Set mostly in rural Maine, *Bjarki, Not Bjarki* is an expansive book. It is a standard work of journalism, describing with nuance and humanity the people and processes that transform the forest into your floor. It is also a meditation on what it means to know another person and to connect with them, especially in an increasingly polarized America. And it is a ghost story about marriage. It is an inquiry into the limits of language and certainty, a rumination on North American colonization, masculinity, gift cards, crab rangoon, bald eagles, and wood, all of it told in an exciting, energized, and original prose.

Bjarki turns out to be someone quite different from whom the author had hoped. A new pine floor buckles. A coyote is shot. A diamond is lost. How do we make sense of the world and of ourselves, especially when the floor beneath us is so unstable, when nothing is quite what we had hoped it would be?

**Matthew J. C. Clark** lives and works as a carpenter in Bath, Maine. His essays have appeared in *True Story*, the *Antioch Review*, the *Seneca Review*, *Ecotone*, the *Indiana Review*, *Fourth Genre*, *Wag’s Revue*, and *CutBank*.



“Matthew Clark has refinished the floorboards of America with so gently glimmering a new sheen of myth that the smartest among us will immediately invest in the cushiest of slippers for fear of muffling their stories again. *Bjarki, Not Bjarki* is a masterfully ecstatic, surprising, and humane debut.”—John D’Agata

**JANUARY 2024**

192 PAGES • 15 B&W PHOTOGRAPHS • 6 × 9 INCHES

\$20.00 PAPER ORIGINAL, 978-1-60938-935-2

\$20.00 E-BOOK, 978-1-60938-936-9

**LITERARY NONFICTION**

# The Medieval Worlds of Neil Gaiman

From *Beowulf* to *Sleeping Beauty*

by Shiloh Carroll

“Illuminating and provocative by turns, this book is a fascinating deep dive into Neil Gaiman’s many medieval inspirations, ranging from Old Norse myth to morality play to folktale. Carroll’s work inventively rereads well-known medieval texts alongside Gaiman’s eclectic and creative reimagining of them in comic, novel, short story, and film.”—Carolyne Larrington, author, *The Norse Myths that Shape the Way We Think*

“With clarity and humor, Carroll puts Neil Gaiman’s works in conversation with chronicle histories, dream-vision poetry, saints’ lives, folktales, and other medieval (and medievalist) texts, drawing out chains of influence and reinterpretation. Like Gaiman himself, this book is accessible to the medievalist, the speculative fiction fan, and everyone in between.”  
—Kavita Mudan Finn, author, *The Last Plantagenet Consorts: Gender, Genre, and Historiography, 1440–1627*

NEIL GAIMAN IS ONE OF THE most widely-known writers of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, having produced fiction and nonfiction, fantasy and horror, television, comics, and prose. He often attributes this eclecticism to his “compost heap” approach to writing, gathering inspiration from life, religion, literature, and mythology.

Readers love to sink into Gaiman’s medieval worlds—but what makes them “medieval”? Shiloh Carroll offers an introduction to the idea of medievalism, how the literature and culture of the Middle Ages have been reinterpreted and repurposed over the centuries, and how the layers of interpretation have impacted Gaiman’s own use of medieval material. She examines influences from Norse mythology and *Beowulf* to medieval romances and fairy tales in order to expand readers’ understanding and appreciation of Gaiman’s work, as well as the rest of the medievalist films, TV shows, and books that are so popular today.

**Shiloh Carroll** is author of *Medievalism in A Song of Ice and Fire and Game of Thrones*. She lives in Nashville, Tennessee.

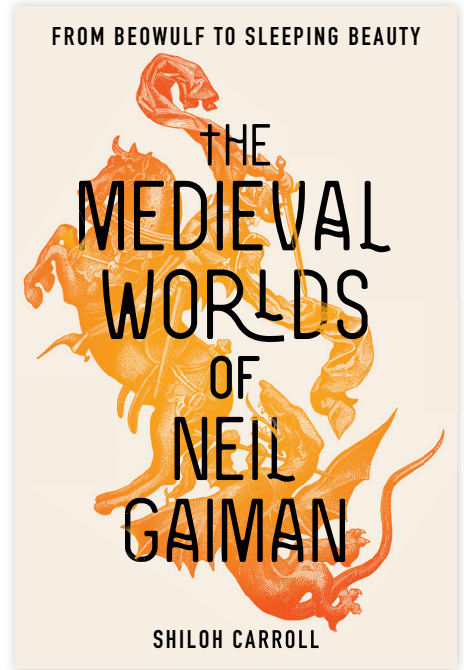
## SEPTEMBER

224 PAGES • 6 B&W IMAGES • 6 × 9 INCHES

\$27.50 PAPER ORIGINAL, 978-1-60938-913-0

\$27.50 E-BOOK, 978-1-60938-914-7

LITERARY CRITICISM / MEDIA



“An accessible survey of medieval influences across Gaiman’s work, imbued with Carroll’s humor and fresh voice. It provides historical and literary context for prominent themes and characters in Gaiman’s most famous stories, as well as analysis of lesser-studied works such as *The Books of Magic* and the 2007 film *Beowulf*.”

—Tara Prescott-Johnson, author, *Neil Gaiman in the 21st Century: Essays on the Novels, Children’s Stories, Online Writings, Comics and Other Works*

# All Black Everything

by Shane Book

## Kuhl House Poets

Mark Levine and Emily Wilson, series editors

“All Black Everything proposes an expansive, global poetics, which is equally a poetics of Black diasporan fluency. All Black’s poems ride the crosscurrents of history and popular culture through African America, the Caribbean, West Africa, the United Kingdom, and Canada. As references whirl and constellate, All Black’s language grows dense and intricate. It gathers color and image. It acquires regional inflections, absorbs a riches of sound, and riffs on proverbial wisdom. The global reach of these poems works to collect and synthesize fragments of culture. Connections are established across time and distance. This synthesis happens as we read, and the rhythms of Black language and music become its measure.”—Kaie Kellough, author, *Magnetic Equator*

THE LYRICS IN *All Black Everything* shine with work and the freedom of young people. Full of menace and humor, objects of warfare and luxury consumption are transformed with Shane Book’s blade of caustic irony against the worldwide nihilism of cash payments, guns, and disease. In their syncopated, slangy, and musically enjambed flow of the digital world, a poet known for singular collections has produced his most inventive and uncompromising volume yet.

The political sublime of a Caribbean poetics ebb and flood in this contagious new voice of borrowings, hijacking the trap house. This is an original collection, daring to assume the voice of the system and its death drives, having fun, mixing it up, throwing hands too. If old pirates rob I, then Shane Book has stolen back something from them. *All Black Everything* is a redemption song.

**Shane Book’s** *Congotronic* (Iowa, 2014) won the Archibald Lampman Award and was a finalist for the Canadian Authors Association Award, Ottawa Book Award, and Griffin Poetry Prize. He is an associate professor in the Department of Writing at the University of Victoria. He lives in Vancouver, British Columbia.

## NOVEMBER

78 PAGES · 5¾ × 8½ INCHES

\$21.00 PAPER ORIGINAL, 978-1-60938-923-9

\$21.00 E-BOOK, 978-1-60938-924-6

## POETRY



“Every rewind rewounds as Book’s book bars out (like breaks free). Reader, peep game—where game is play, prey, and how they stay laid down in an unsound system of robber-baron domination, post-Maria neglected Puerto Rico, (in)appropriation, and grief on grief on grief. Ergo: ‘Very hardcore business, man.’ *All Black Everything* left me syntaxed, thus spun as black wax under a needle; the poet on some Tender Buttons, but the buttons are an MPCs or 808s. Get it, get it. It’s ‘so good, God,’ Book leaves black ‘satchels stuffed with green.’ I pray on everything: should we meet in the lettuce aisles of ‘fully white-peopled cities,’ let us stay all Black fullness when we get there.”

—Douglas Kearney, author, *Sho*



# Anthem Speed

by Christopher Bolin

## Kuhl House Poets

Mark Levine and Emily Wilson, series editors

“What won’t a ‘saint with a shovel’ unearth in these exquisite, disquieting, soul-trawling poems that variously mine, measure, tally, sample, body-scan, and heat-capture our bereaved universe? *Anthem Speed* drops us here in the ruins mid-song, in wonder and sorrow, dappled ‘in forensic light,’ holding on to Bolin’s dire music for dear life.”—Robyn Schiff, author, *A Woman of Property*

**ANTHEM SPEED** AFFIRMS Christopher Bolin’s emergence as a singular stylist in twenty-first century American poetry. By turns austere, gritty, futuristic, and visionary, Bolin’s poems trace the romance between beauty and destruction like vapor trails, seeming to emerge from nowhere and yielding a lucid, unearthly glow, an evocation of absent presences and scattered signs: “among / the disinformation of the distress feeds,” Bolin writes, “a pilot hears his coordinates / being called by other planes.”

This collection evokes the vividly mysterious remnants of a lost civilization. Its preoccupations are unnervingly familiar: war, injustice, brutalization of land, air, water, and species, technologies of terror and dehumanization. Simultaneously antique and space-age, inhabiting a world of elemental rites and of artificial imaginations, Bolin tests the acoustics of operating rooms, battlefields, courtrooms, and mountainsides, and envisions—with animal acuity—a world imperiled and empowered by its leaders and myths.

**Christopher Bolin’s** previous collections include *Ascension Theory* (Iowa, 2013) and *Form from Form* (Iowa, 2018). Bolin teaches at the College of St. Benedict / St. John’s University, and lives in St. Joseph, Minnesota.

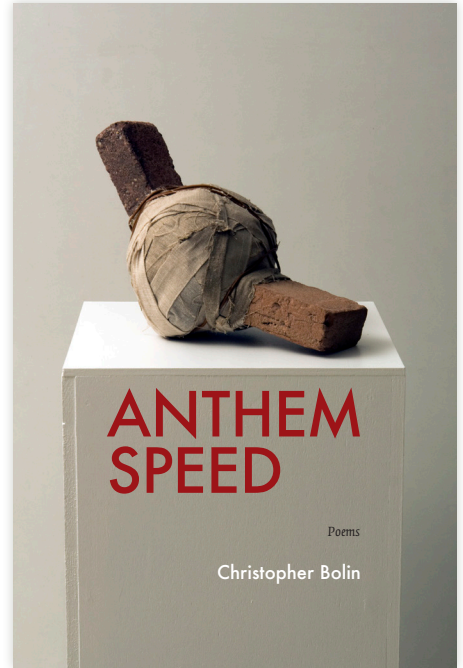
## NOVEMBER

68 PAGES • 6 × 9 INCHES

\$20.00 PAPER ORIGINAL, 978-1-60938-921-5

\$20.00 E-BOOK, 978-1-60938-922-2

## POETRY



“Here the world is an ongoing apocalypse, where ‘the uranium thinning quail’s eggs’ hint at a wider irradiation, where ‘birds’ bodies smell of smoke,’ and the images chatter their jagged clarities through the Geiger counter’s static, and the logic of the lyric poem suffers such mutation that one line’s leap to the next can feel like a gnostic juxtaposition. Search engine bots vie with capital’s half-life to claim the human heart’s worried worth, and the security state sings to the link satellites that surveil us. And yet a strange hope runs its electric current through these lines: not that all is not lost, but that the very evidences of our vast dismantling can be rebuilt into another structure, ones that witness the world even if it cannot heal it, while quietly suggesting that a meaningful life still exists, and these poems are our path to it.”

—Dan Beachy-Quick, author, *Arrows*

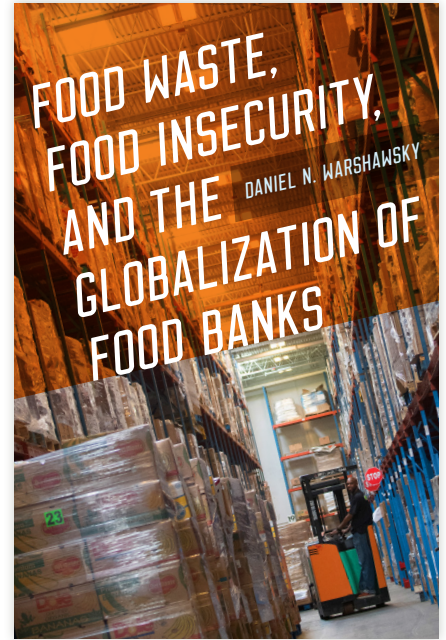
# Food Waste, Food Insecurity, and the Globalization of Food Banks

by Daniel N. Warshawsky

FOOD BANKS—warehouses that collect and systematize surplus food—have expanded into one of the largest mechanisms to redistribute food waste. From their origins in North America in the 1960s, food banks provide food to communities in approximately one hundred countries on six continents. This book analyzes the development of food banks across the world and the limits of food charity as a means to reduce food insecurity and food waste.

Based on fifteen years of in-depth fieldwork on four continents, Daniel Warshawsky illustrates how and why food banks proliferate across the globe even though their impacts may be limited. He suggests that we need to reformulate the role of food banks. The mission of food banks needs to be more realistic, as food surpluses cannot reduce food insecurity on a significant scale. Food banks need to regain their institutional independence from the state and corporations, and incorporate the knowledge and experiences of the food insecure in the daily operations of the food system. These collective changes can contribute to a future where food banks play a smaller but more targeted role in food systems.

**Daniel N. Warshawsky** is associate professor in the School of Social Sciences and International Studies at Wright State University. He directs the Master of Public Administration program. Warshawsky lives in Cincinnati, Ohio.



**JANUARY 2024**

250 PAGES · 8 B&W PHOTOS · 5 B&W FIGURES · 8 B&W MAPS

3 B&W IMAGES · 6 × 9 INCHES

\$40.00 PAPER ORIGINAL, 978-1-60938-933-8

\$40.00 E-BOOK, 978-1-60938-934-5

**FOOD / POLITICS**

# Iowa's Changing Wildlife

Three Decades of Gain and Loss

by James J. Dinsmore and Stephen J. Dinsmore

**A Bur Oak Book**

Holly Carver, series editor

“Two of Iowa’s greatest authorities on wildlife from two generations who saw remarkable changes report on the state of Iowa’s wildlife in this wonderful book. It is essential reading for Iowa’s wildlife enthusiasts of today and will be an invaluable resource for Iowa’s wildlife enthusiasts of the future.”

—Adam Janke, Iowa State University

MUCH HAS CHANGED with Iowa’s wildlife in the years 1990 to 2020. Some species such as Canada goose, wild turkey, and white-tailed deer that once were rare in Iowa are now common, and others like sandhill crane, river otter, and trumpeter swan are becoming increasingly abundant. *Iowa’s Changing Wildlife* provides an up-to-date, scientifically based summary of changes in the distribution, status, conservation needs, and future prospects of about sixty species of Iowa’s birds and mammals whose populations have increased or decreased in the past three decades. Readers will learn more about familiar species, become acquainted with the status of less familiar species, and find out how many of the species around them have fared during this era of transformation.

**James J. Dinsmore** is professor emeritus of animal ecology and management at Iowa State University. He is author of *A Country So Full of Game: The Story of Wildlife in Iowa* (Iowa, 1994). He lives in Ames, Iowa, and The Villages, Florida. **Stephen J. Dinsmore** is professor of wildlife ecology and chair of the Department of Natural Resource Ecology and Management at Iowa State University. He is author of *Iowa Wildlife Viewing Guide*. Dinsmore lives in Ames, Iowa.



“Since Iowa is one of Earth’s most modified landscapes, it’s critically important to examine how native animals have changed in response. Here the Dinsmores provide well-synthesized wildlife records, as well as rich, historically accurate stories about Iowa’s remaining birds and mammals. This book opens the door to understanding the diverse and fascinating lives that still abound around us.”

—Cornelia F. Mutel, author, *A Sugar Creek Chronicle: Observing Climate Change from a Midwestern Woodland*

“For wildlife enthusiasts, this book is the perfect companion to *A Country So Full of Game*, the 1994 volume that traced the history of Iowa wildlife since European settlement of the Midwest. This book traces the efforts and successes in recovery of many wildlife species since that time and the quiet disappearance of some others. Their collective future, as the Dinsmores make clear, is up to us.”

—Jim Pease, retired Iowa State University extension wildlife specialist

**DECEMBER**

292 PAGES • 31 B&W MAPS • 23 B&W IMAGES • 6 × 9 INCHES

\$30.00 PAPER ORIGINAL, 978-1-60938-925-3

\$30.00 E-BOOK, 978-1-60938-926-0

**NATURE / MIDWEST**

# The JAB Anthology

Selections from the *Journal of Artists' Books*, 1994–2020

edited by Johanna Drucker and Brad Freeman

**Impressions: Studies in the Art, Culture, and Future of Books**

Matthew P. Brown, series editor

THIS ANTHOLOGY OF articles selected from *The Journal of Artists' Books* contains some of the best critical writing on artists' books produced in the last quarter of a century. Driven by the editorial vision of artist Brad Freeman, JAB began as a provocative pamphlet and expanded to become a significant journal documenting artists' books from multiple perspectives. With its range of participants and approaches, JAB provided a unique venue for sustained critical writing in the field and developed a broad subscriber base among institutional and private collectors and readers. More than two hundred writers and artists from nearly two dozen countries around the globe were published in its pages.

The JAB Anthology contains contributions by many renowned figures in the field including: Anne Moeglin-Delcroix, Janet Zweig, Monica Carroll, Adam Dickerson, Alisa Scudamore, Mary Jo Pauly, April Sheridan, Doro Boehme, Gerrit Jan de Rook, Océane Del-leaux, Brandon Graham, Jérôme Dupeyrat, Ward Tietz, Paulo Silveira, Philip Cabau, Leszek Brogowski, Lyn Ashby, Tim Mosely, Debra Parr, Pedro Moura, Levi Sherman, Catarina Figueiredo Cardoso, Isabel Baraona, and the editors.

**Johanna Drucker** is a scholar, critic, and book artist who lives in Los Angeles, California. She is the Breslauer Professor of bibliography and Distinguished Professor of information studies at UCLA. Drucker's *The Century of Artists' Books* remains a key reference text in the field. **Brad Freeman** has worked in the field of artist book production and education while working at the Visual Studies Workshop Press, Pyramid Atlantic, Nexus Press, and the Center for Book and Paper Arts / Columbia College Chicago. Freeman lives in Chicago, Illinois.

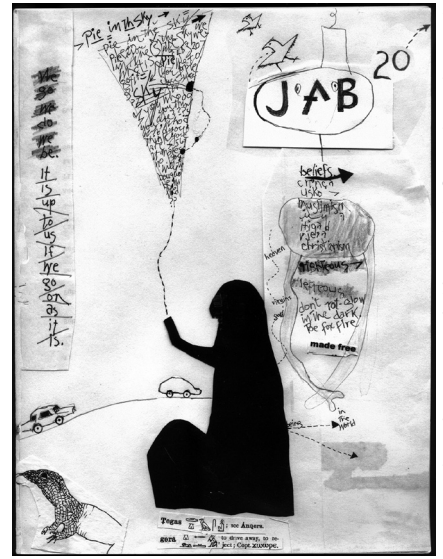
**OCTOBER**

280 PAGES · 13 B&W PHOTOS · 45 B&W IMAGES · 7 × 9 INCHES

\$50.00S PAPER ORIGINAL, 978-1-60938-915-4

\$50.00S E-BOOK, 978-1-60938-916-1

**BOOKS / ART**



JAB20 cover by Ruth Laxson. Used with permission from Robyn Robton Davis

“This wonderful and indispensable book cuts away from mere craft to discover the artist’s book as a strange and improbable terrain of invention in art and publishing. Here the best work in the field grapples with the artist’s book as a problem space, an indefinite and critical array of forms, materials, sensations, and strategies.”—Nicholas Thoburn, author, *Anti-Book: On the Art and Politics of Radical Publishing*

“This tremendous anthology distills JAB’s core mission to elevate the critical discourse on artists’ books. From canonical essays by Drucker, Freeman, and Moeglin-Delcroix to dialogs with key players in the field like Lyons or Carrión, this book will serve as a valuable resource for artists, educators, students, curators, and scholars.”  
—Anna Sigríður Arnar, author, *The Book as Instrument: Stéphane Mallarmé, The Artist’s Book and the Transformation of Print Culture*

## Beyond Ridiculous

Making Gay Theatre with Charles Busch in 1980s New York

by Kenneth Elliott

### Studies in Theatre History and Culture

Heather S. Nathans, series editor

“As ‘one who was there,’ Ken Elliott’s *Beyond Ridiculous* succeeds on multiple levels. It offers a comprehensive and entertaining analysis of playwright Charles Busch’s work and Theatre-in-Limbo, and also illuminates the economic and artistic landscape of New York City in the 1980s, a wildly creative but fraught decade that continues to resonate today. A must-read for anyone interested in the arts and especially the theatre.”—Julie Halston, actor and comedian, four-time MAC Award winner

*BEYOND RIDICULOUS* TELLS the story of Theatre-in-Limbo, a downtown band of actors formed in 1984 by director Kenneth Elliott and by playwright and drag legend Charles Busch. Within a year, they went from performing *Vampire Lesbians of Sodom* at the Limbo Lounge, a raffish club in the East Village, to the longest-running nonmusical in Off-Broadway history. From 1984 to 1991, Busch starred in eight Limbo productions, always in outrageously fabulous drag.

In *Beyond Ridiculous*, Elliott narrates in first-person the company’s Cinderella tale of fun, heartbreak, and dishy drama. At the center of the book is a young Charles Busch, an unforgettable personality fighting to be seen, be heard, and express his unique style as a writer-performer in plays such as *Psycho Beach Party* and *The Lady in Question*. The tragedy of AIDS among treasured friends in the company, the struggle for mainstream acceptance of LGBTQ+ theatre during the reign of President Ronald Reagan, and the exploration of new ways of being a gay theatre artist make the book a bittersweet and joyous ride.

**Kenneth Elliott** has directed Off-Broadway plays and musicals at New York theatres such as the Public, Primary Stages, and Manhattan Theatre Club. He is associate professor of theatre at Rutgers University–Camden, and chair of the Department of Visual, Media, and Performing Arts. He lives in Collingswood, New Jersey.

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**THEATRE / LGBTQ+**



Photo by George Dudley

“Kenneth Elliott lovingly charts the history of not only Theatre-in-Limbo, one of the most groundbreaking companies of the 1980s, but he also chronicles a harrowing time for gay men, who were confronting the terror of AIDS and a shockingly indifferent government, and who found their deliverance in sequins, greasepaint, and wickedly subversive humor. This book is an invaluable record of our ability to transcend even the darkest times.”—Doug Wright, playwright, Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award winner

“*Beyond Ridiculous* engages a queer methodology to reflect upon a friendship and collaboration between the author and Charles Busch, revealing how central theatre was to kinship and survival for the gay community in 1980s New York. As a celebration of queer solidarity in theatre, it is erudite, provocative, heartwarming, and utterly enjoyable to read.”—Sean F. Edgecomb, author, *The Taylor Mac Book: Ritual, Realness and Radical Performance*

# Dissonant Voices

*Race, Jazz, and Innovative Poetics in Midcentury America*

by Joseph Pizza

## Contemporary North American Poetry Series

Alan Golding, Lynn Keller, and Adalaide Morris, series editors

“Dissonant Voices takes on a fascinating, understudied topic: the role played by jazz and interracial dialogue in the formation of postwar New American Poetry. Pizza’s exciting book breaks new ground and opens fertile territory for the study of both American poetry and the deep influence of jazz on American literature and culture.”—Andrew Epstein, author, *The Cambridge Introduction to American Poetry since 1945*

DISSONANT VOICES UNCOVERS the interracial collaboration at the heart of the postwar avant-garde. While previous studies have explored the writings of individual authors and groups, this work is among the first to trace the cross-cultural debate that inspired and energized mid-century literature in America and beyond. By reading a range of poets in the full context of the friendships and romantic relationships that animated their writing, this study offers new perspectives on key textual moments in the foundation and development of postmodern literature in the U.S. Ultimately, these readings aim to integrate our understanding of New American Poetry, the Black Arts Movement, and the various contemporary approaches to poetry and poetics that have been inspired by their examples.

Joseph Pizza is associate professor of English at Belmont Abbey College. He lives in Cornelius, North Carolina.

“Back in my student days, I read the minutes of a Black Mountain College meeting that discussed admitting African American students in a state that was segregated by law. I recognized the importance of that set of minutes, and have been awaiting the arrival of a scholar who would look into this history more closely. Joseph Pizza is the first to do this so thoroughly.”—Aldon L. Nielsen, author, *The Inside Songs of Amiri Baraka*

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LITERARY CRITICISM

# The Poetics of Scale

From Apollinaire to Big Data

by Conrad Steel

## Contemporary North American Poetry Series

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“Steel makes a compelling case for Guillaume Apollinaire’s far-reaching impact on a century’s worth of U.S. poetry. This highly original and historically rigorous book traces the migration of Apollinaire’s influence stateside. Persuasively argued and elegantly written, *The Poetics of Scale* offers an invaluable contribution to the study of American poetry and poetics.”  
—Stephen Voyce, author, *Poetic Community: Avant-Garde Activism and Cold War Culture*

SINCE THE START OF the twentieth century, poets have been irresistibly drawn to the image of the poem as a kind of data-handling, a way of mediating between the divergent scales of aesthetics and infrastructure, language and technology. Conrad Steel shows how the history of poetry—with its particular formal affordances, and the particular hopes and fears we invest it with—has always been bound with our changing logistics of macroscale representation. This history takes us back to the years before the First World War in Paris, where the poet Guillaume Apollinaire claimed to have invented a new mode of poetry large enough to take on the challenges of the coming twentieth century.

*The Poetics of Scale* follows Apollinaire’s ideas across the Atlantic and examines how and why his work became such a vital source of inspiration for American poets through the era of intensive American economic expansion and up to the present day. Threading together Apollinaire’s work in the 1910s with three of his American successors—Louis Zukofsky in the 1930s, Allen Ginsberg in the 1950s, and Alice Notley from the 1970s onward—it shows how poetry as a cultural technique became the crucial test case for the scale of our collective imagination.

**Conrad Steel** is a writer and researcher. He lives in London, England.

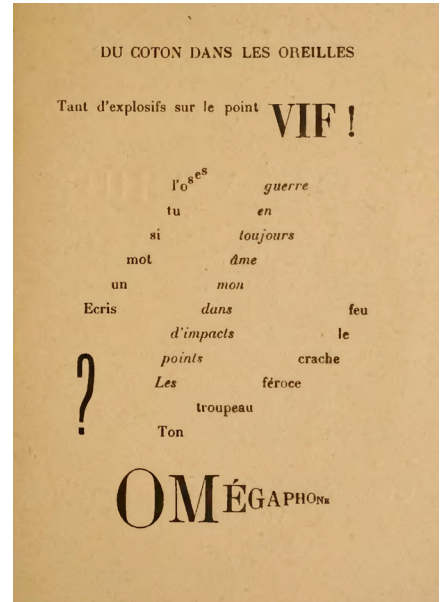
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**LITERARY CRITICISM**



“A sophisticated, colorful exploration of the reception of Apollinaire’s poetry in the United States. Steel tracks the complex shifts and perplexities involved in the attraction to Apollinaire’s intimate, fluent modernism with its fusion of charismatic I-voice and choral voicing, its paratactic form, and socially conscious, affect-inflected acoustics of radical ambience.”  
—Adam Piette, University of Sheffield

# Polish Theatre Revisited

Theatre Fans in the Nineteenth Century

by Agata Łuksza

**Studies in Theatre History and Culture**

Heather S. Nathans, series editor

“A brilliant example of how theatre is not only a national history repository, but of how the conversations across the footlights between actors and audiences can be highly provocative, political, and empathetic concurrently. Łuksza’s vivid descriptions of nineteenth-century Polish theatremania celebrate and apotheosize fan and actor practices in this long overdue, illuminating book.”—Caroline Heim, author, *Audience as Performer: The Changing Role of Theatre Audiences in the Twenty-first Century*

**POLISH THEATRE REVISITED** explores nineteenth-century Polish theatre through the lens of theatre audiences. Agata Łuksza places special emphasis on the most engaged spectators, known as “theatremaniacs”—from what they wore, to what they bought, to what they ate. Her source material is elusive ephemera from fans’ lives, such as notes scribbled on a weekly list of shows in the Warsaw theatres, collections of theatre postcards, and recipes for sweets named after famous actors.

The fannish behavior of theatremaniacs was usually deemed excessive or in poor taste by people in positions of power, as it clashed with the ongoing embourgeoisement of the theatre and the disciplining of audiences. Nevertheless, the theatre was one of the key areas where early fan cultures emerged, and theatremaniacs indulged in diverse fan practices in opposition to the forces reforming the theatre and its spectatorship.

**Agata Łuksza** is assistant professor at the Institute of Polish Culture, University of Warsaw. She is author of *Glamour, Femininity, Performance: Actress as an Object of Desire*. Łuksza lives in Warsaw, Poland.



Courtesy of the National Library in Warsaw

“The future of fan studies lies in new historical and cross-cultural scholarship; here, Łuksza boldly offers both. Through imaginative research, Łuksza excavates hidden elements of nineteenth-century Polish theatre life, shaped by charismatic stars, rival audiences, and resistance politics, establishing Warsaw’s ‘theatremaniacs’ as a definitive example of historical fandom.”—Daniel Cavicchi, author, *Listening and Longing: Music Lovers in the Age of Barnum*

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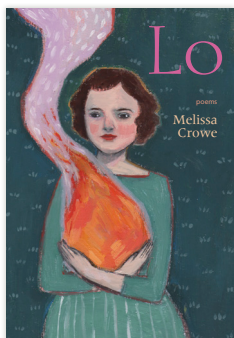
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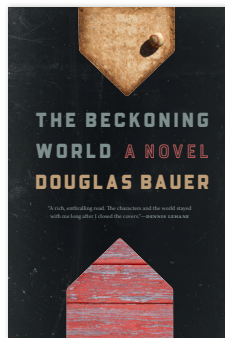
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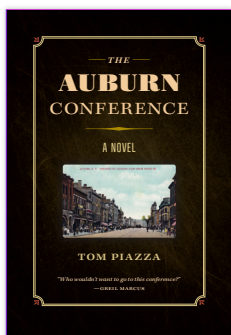
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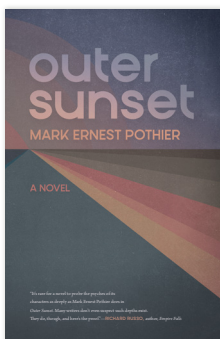
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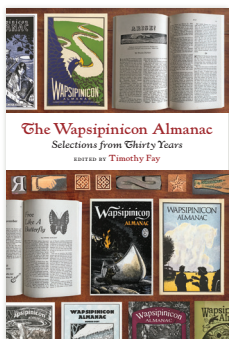
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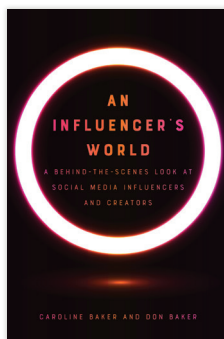
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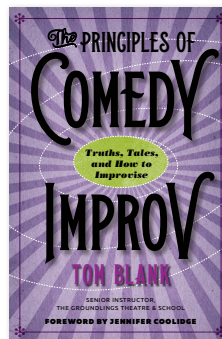
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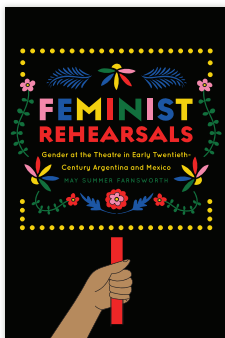
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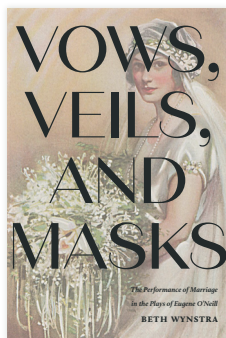
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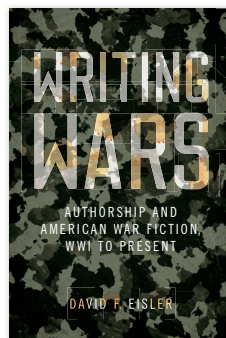
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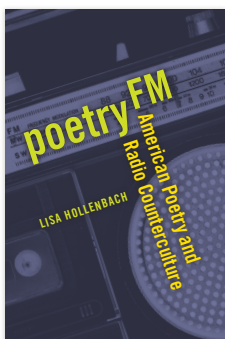
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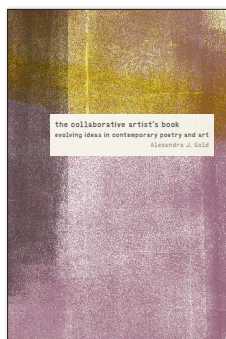
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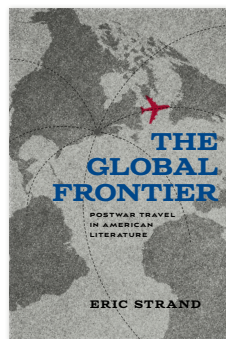
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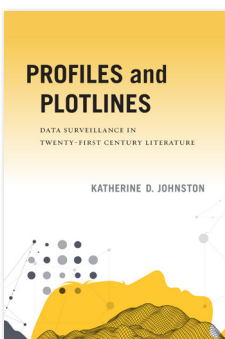
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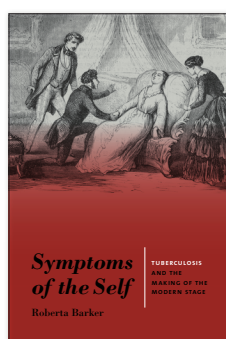
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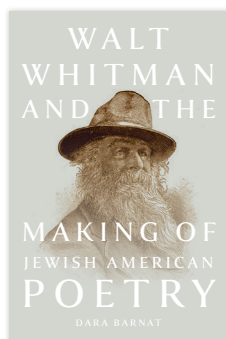
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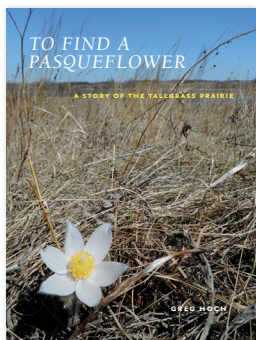
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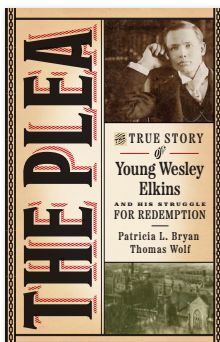
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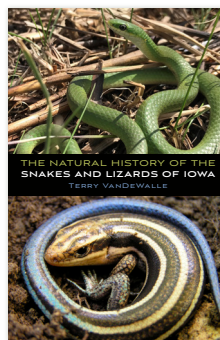
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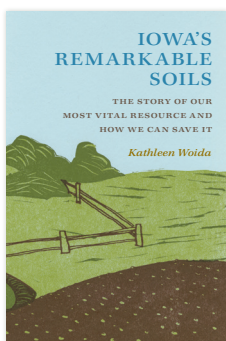
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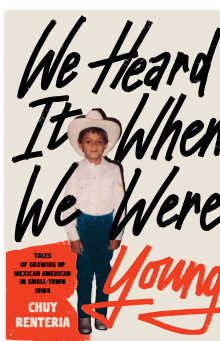
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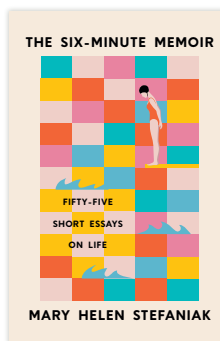
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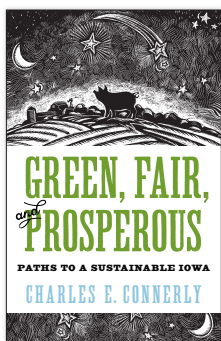
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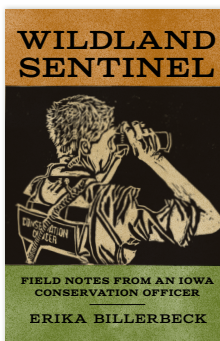
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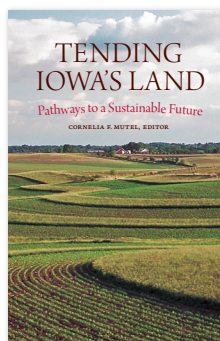
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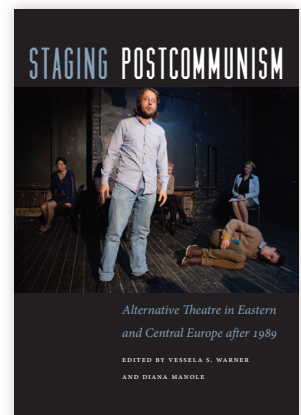
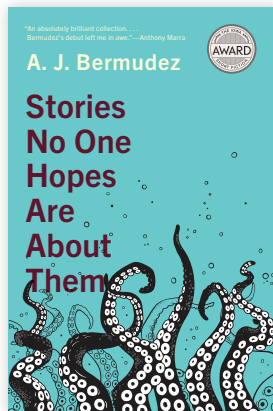
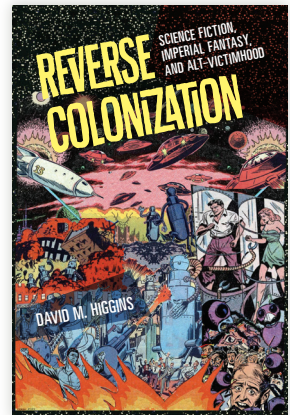
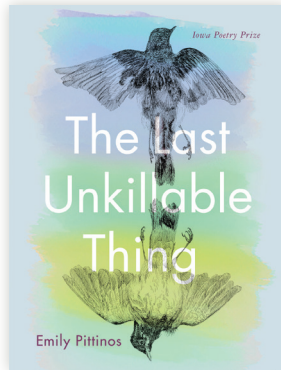
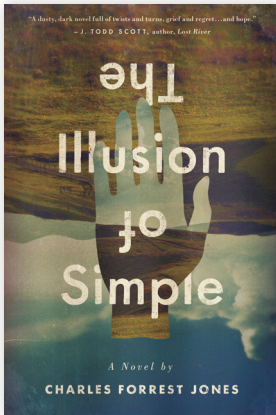
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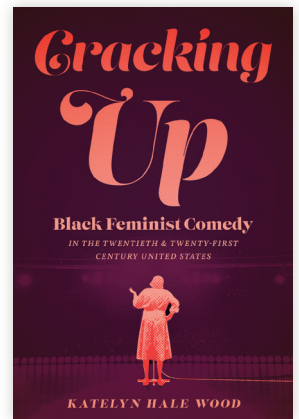
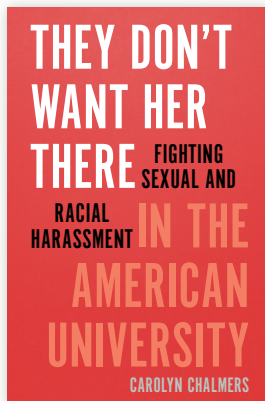
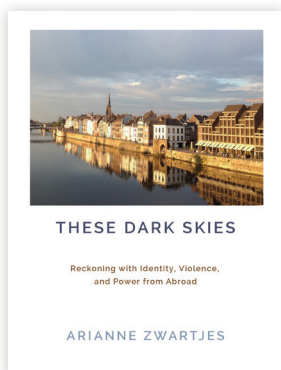
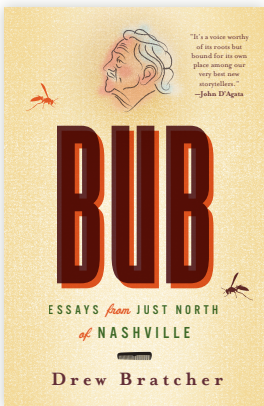
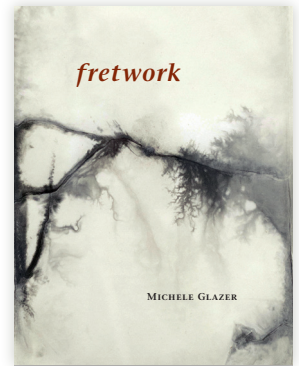
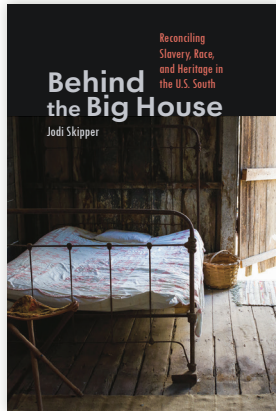
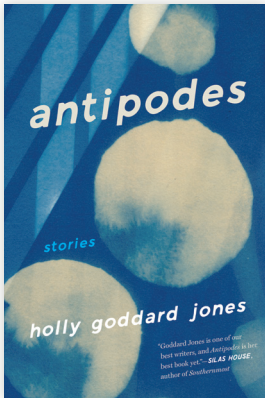
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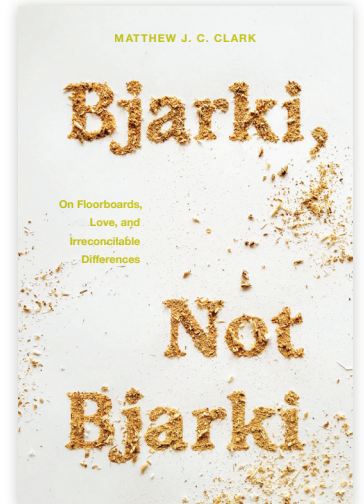
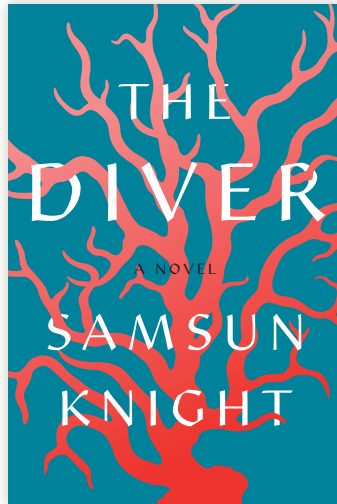
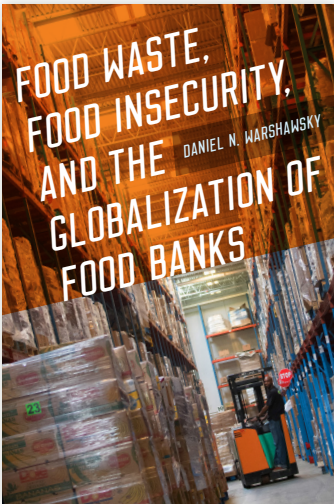
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