

A black and white photograph of a person's legs sticking out of a hole in a white surface, set against a black background. The legs are positioned in the bottom right corner, with feet pointing towards the center. The white surface has a rough, torn edge, and the black background is solid and dark.

BIBLIOASIS  
*Winter 2023*

# BIBLIOASIS

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Laureen Cusack Ext. 120  
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Vanessa Di Gregorio Ext. 122  
vanessad@ampersandinc.ca

Sarah Gilligan Ext. 129  
sarahg@ampersandinc.ca

Kris Hykel Ext. 127  
krish@ampersandinc.ca

#### For more information or promotional materials, please contact:

Emily Stephenson-Bowes, Operations:  
ebowes@biblioasis.com  
Emily Mernin, Marketing & Publicity:  
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# WINTER 2023

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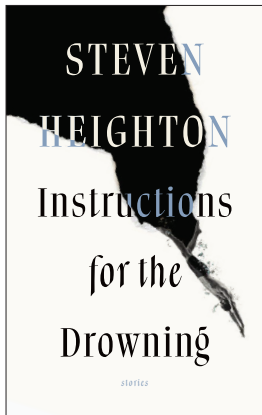
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# STEVEN HEIGHTON

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE DROWNING

“As good a writer as Canada has ever produced.”  
*NATIONAL POST*



April 18, 2023 | Fiction  
5 × 8, 224 pp  
\$22.95 | 9781771965354  
(trade paper)

#### COMP TITLES:

*Here the Dark*, David Bergen  
*Light Lifting*, Alex MacLeod  
*Reaching Mithymna*,  
Steven Heighton

A man recalls his father's advice on how to save a drowning person, but struggles to come to terms with its application. Locked down with his new partner and her aging cat, a recovering alcoholic must continue learning how to balance control and vulnerability. When his husband dies, a son's request of his conservative father teaches both men to see one another, and their relationship, anew. In stories about love and fear, Romantic idealism and practical limitations, self-reckoning and how we learn to care for one another, Steven Heighton's *Instructions for the Drowning* is the unforgettable last collection by a writer working at the height of his powers.

**Steven Heighton (1961–2022)** was the author of nineteen previous books, including the Writers' Trust Hilary Weston Prize finalist *Reaching Mithymna: Among the Volunteers and Refugees on Lesvos* and *The Waking Comes Late*, winner of the Governor General's Award for poetry.



## PRAISE FOR STEVEN HEIGHTON

“[A] brilliant storyteller ... [His] exquisite, powerful meditations on who we are place Heighton among the great Canadian writers ... His focus is contemporary, but he is a practitioner of the old school, a writer for those who love to read widely and deeply.” *LITERARY REVIEW OF CANADA*

“The key to the book's force is Heighton's imperative to humanize and individualize everyone he encounters ... These are not statistics but people, each sensitively depicted ... A stunning book, by turns heartbreaking and affirming, fundamentally human in its depth and scope.” *QUILL & QUIRE* (starred review)

“Vivid and powerfully drawn ... *The Shadow Boxer* is an energetic, fluent and interesting novel by a writer who has already shown himself to be gifted, capable of exploring and experimenting with language.” *TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT*

“Heighton works (and plays) with words in wondrous ways few contemporary poets even dream of attempting, let alone conquering.” *GLOBE AND MAIL*

# JEANNIE MARSHALL

## ALL THINGS MOVE

LEARNING TO LOOK IN THE SISTINE CHAPEL

A writer studies a famous work of art only to see herself and her own cultural moment revealed at its heart.

Jeannie Marshall lived in Rome for ten years without visiting the Sistine Chapel: she didn't want to have a superficial experience of the frescos, but she wasn't sure how, amidst the crowds of tour groups and the noise of pop culture allusions, she could have anything but. What's more, she wondered what this very old, very Catholic art, created by a man who grew up under the warm Tuscan sun of the Renaissance, could possibly have to say to a modern woman raised in the New World by a family in retreat from Christianity—and what could it say to any of us living in the twenty-first century.

*All Things Move: Learning to Look in the Sistine Chapel* is Marshall's story of her intentional encounter with one of the world's most cherished artworks and an impassioned defence of the role of art in our lives. A personal account of finding meaning, and a model for how to engage deeply with the past, *All Things Move* is a quietly sublime meditation on how art, once invested with the power to save our souls, can enlarge our lives if only we learn how to look.

April 4, 2023 | Nonfiction

5 × 8, 200pp | \$ 24.95

9781771965330 (hardcover)

Fifty full-colour photographs and reproductions

COMP TITLES:

*So Much Longing in So Little Space*, Karl Ove Knausgaard

*A Ghost in the Throat*, Doireann Ní Ghríofa

*The Lonely City*, Olivia Laing

**Jeannie Marshall** is a writer who has been living in Italy since 2002.

Formerly a staff features writer at the *National Post*, she is the author of two previous nonfiction books. Her journalism and literary



nonfiction has appeared in *Macleans*, *The Walrus*, *The Common*, *Brick*, *Literary Review of Canada*, and *Literary Mama*.



# CHRISTOPHE BERNARD

## THE HOLLOW BEAST

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH BY LAZER LEDERHENDLER

*Don Quixote* meets *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* in this slapstick epic about destiny, family demons, and revenge.



April 4, 2023 | Fiction  
5.5 x 8.5, 456pp  
\$24.95 | 9781771965552  
(trade paper)

#### COMP TITLES:

*The Dishwasher*,  
Stéphane Larue  
*Querelle of Roberval*,  
Kevin Lambert  
*Arvida*, Samuel Archibald

In 1911, in a hockey game in Quebec's Gaspé Peninsula, local tough guy Billy Joe Pictou fires the puck into Monti Bouge's mouth. When Monti collapses with his head across the goal line, Victor Bradley, erstwhile referee and local mailman, rules that the goal counts. Monti's ensuing revenge for this injustice sprawls over three generations, one hundred years and dozens of alcohol-soaked tall tales, from treachery in northern gold-mining camps to the appearance of a legendary beast by turns playful and ferocious. It's up to Monti's grandson, François, to make sense of the vendetta between Monti and Bradley that has shaped the destiny of their town and everyone who lives there. In a sumptuous, unpredictable language and slapstick comedy, Christophe Bernard reveals himself as a master of epic storytelling.

Christophe Bernard's *The Hollow Beast* was a finalist for the 2018 Governor General's Literary Award for Fiction in French and won the Quebec-Ontario Prize, the Quebec Booksellers' Prize, and the Jovette-Bernier Prize. Originally from Carleton-sur-Mer in the Gaspé region of Quebec, he lives in Burlington, Vermont.



### PRAISE FOR CHRISTOPHE BERNARD

"Christophe Bernard has hollowed out the past like a beast and, like an alchemist, has excavated a language of pure gold. He has added a great, savage nugget to Quebec literature." *LA PRESSE* (Montreal)

"Christophe Bernard scores a huge hit with *The Hollow Beast* ... He gives birth to a sort of crazed novel in the form of a fireworks show ... Bernard slips into the patchwork skin of a kind of Thomas Pynchon crossbred with Rabelais and Victory-Lévy Beaulieu (with a pint of James Joyce) ... His writing is flamboyant with vernacular flights. An example of utter mastery." *LE DEVOIR* (Montreal)

"The reader swims in sheer delirium reading *The Hollow Beast*, a novel from the Gaspé that takes place over several generations. Passionate and unsettling ... A universe plugged in at 10,000 volts!" *RADIO CANADA*

"A tale with plenty of momentum that covers a whole century and is at once fantastic, funny, cruel, brilliant." *LE JOURNAL DE MONTRÉAL*

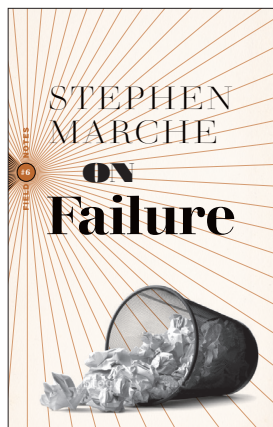
"A family saga unlike any other ... And it's funny! I envy this writer's talent." *L'ACTUALITÉ* (Montreal)

# STEPHEN MARCHE

## ON FAILURE

FIELD NOTES #6

Writing is, and always will be, an act defined by failure.  
The best strategy is to just get used to it.



Feb 14, 2023 | Nonfiction  
4.25 x 7.75, 128pp  
\$16.95 | 9781771965163  
(trade paper)

#### COMP TITLES:

*The Next Civil War*,  
Stephen Marche  
*How Shakespeare Changed  
Everything*, Stephen Marche  
*On Browsing*, Jason Guriel

**Stephen Marche** is a novelist, essayist and cultural commentator. He is the author of half a dozen books, and has written opinion pieces and essays for the *New Yorker*, the *New York Times*, the *Atlantic*, *Esquire*, *The Walrus*, and many others. He lives in Toronto with his wife and children.



Failure is a topic discussed in every creative writing department in the world, but this is the book every beginning writer should have on their shelf to prepare them—which is to say, to console them in their misery. Less a guide to writing and more a guide to how to simply keep on going, *On Failure: The Peculiar Perseverance Required to Endure the Life of a Writer* describes the defining role played by rejection in literary endeavors and contemplates failure as the essence of the writer's life. Along with his own history of rejection, Marche offers an historical framework—from Ovid's exile and Dostoevsky's mock execution to more contemporary tribulations—through which to consider rejection, and addresses the impact of the widespread decline of humanism on the twenty-first century writing life.

## PRAISE FOR STEPHEN MARCHE

"*How Shakespeare Changed Everything* is fun and informative, with more than its share of 'Aha!' moments packed between its diminutive covers. Mr. Marche's thesis is compelling and probably more true than we ever imagined." *NEW YORK JOURNAL OF BOOKS*

"So dazzling, so unsentimental ... A work that is both beautiful and confusing. In other words, an honest love story." *NEW YORK TIMES*

"Brilliant ... Marche has created a stunning, evocative, and impressionistic account of the ascent of wealth in the twentieth century. ... *The Hunger of the Wolf* could be Marche's breakthrough novel." *BOOKLIST* (starred review)

"A dazzling virtuoso piece. Marche turns the making of a family's fortune into a fascinating, bloody fairy tale." *EMMA DONOGHUE, AUTHOR OF ROOM AND FROG MUSIC*

"Untrammelled, unfettered, unprecedented, unselfconscious and friggin' unbelievable, this book busts the novel open, makes literature an open question, and maps out brave new worlds for the reader to spelunk. With Raymond and Hannah I knew this guy was up to something brilliant. *Shining at the Bottom of the Sea* tells me I hadn't the faintest idea." *DANIEL HANDLER, AUTHOR OF ADVERBS*

# ROY JACOBSEN

## JUST A MOTHER

THE BARRØY CHRONICLES #4

The fourth installment in Roy Jacobsen's bestselling Barrøy Chronicles.



Mar 07, 2023 | Fiction  
5.25 x 7.75, 224 pp  
\$22.95 | 9781771965187  
(trade paper)

#### PREVIOUS SERIES TITLES:

*The Unseen*  
*White Shadow*  
*Eyes of the Rigel*

After a long journey through Norway, Ingrid has finally returned to Barrøy. Life is more stable now, but the war still casts its long shadows across the country. Former collaborators face cold shoulders and retaliation, while others simply wish to leave the painful years in the past. When a boy arrives on the island and his father disappears, Ingrid assumes responsibility for the boy and adopts him. And so Mathias becomes a central part of the Barrøy community, together with Kaja, Ingrid's daughter by birth.

Life on the island is demanding, but the letters from friends in Oslo and Trondheim tell of a Norwegian society undergoing dramatic changes. Which stories should Ingrid keep to herself, and which ones should she bring to light? What kind of future does she imagine—for herself, and for the children?

Roy Jacobsen is the author of more than fifteen novels and a member of the Norwegian Academy for Language and Literature. Previous books in the Barrøy Chronicles have been shortlisted for the Man Booker International Prize and the International Dublin Literary Award, selected as Indie Next picks in North America, and named *New York Times* New and Noteworthy books.

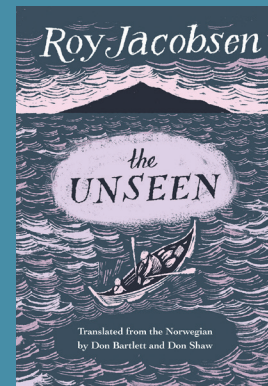
## PRAISE FOR THE BARRØY CHRONICLES

"Even by his high standards, his magnificent new novel *The Unseen* is Jacobsen's finest to date, as blunt as it is subtle and is easily among the best books I have ever read." *IRISH TIMES*

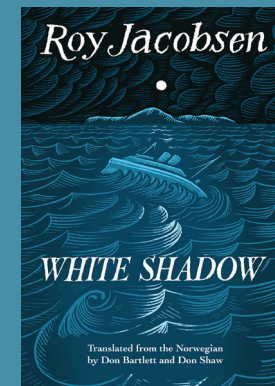
"A profound interrogation of freedom and fate, as well as a fascinating portrait of a vanished time, written in prose as clear and washed clean as the world after a storm." *THE GUARDIAN*

"The subtle translation, with its invented dialect, conveys a timeless, provincial voice ... A blunt, brilliant book." *FINANCIAL TIMES*

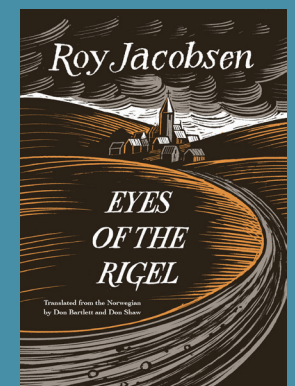
"Disarmingly plainspoken narration brings into sharp relief both individuals and a world in wartime crisis." *KIRKUS REVIEWS* (starred review)



*The Unseen*  
9781771963190  
\$22.95



*White Shadow*  
9781771964036  
\$22.95



*Eyes of the Rigel*  
9781771964753  
\$22.95

# JOSH COOK

## THE ART OF LIBROMANCY

ON SELLING BOOKS AND READING BOOKS IN  
THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

An exploration of the politics, philosophies, technologies, emotions, and craft of contemporary bookselling.

In a society filled with misinformation, disinformation, conspiracy theories, and propaganda, true storytelling and story-reading are more important than ever. But with Amazon continuing to increase its power in bookselling and publishing and the publishing industry consolidating into even fewer houses, telling important stories and getting those stories to readers is increasingly difficult. From the relationship between bookselling and white supremacy, to the economics of bookselling in contemporary hyper-capitalism, to a new philosophy of “good taste,” to the craft and art of hand-selling, and including *The Least We Can Do: Free Speech, White Supremacy, and Independent Bookstores*, a chapbook published in celebration of Independent Bookseller Day 2021, veteran bookseller and writer Josh Cook turns a generous yet critical eye to an industry at the heart of American culture, sharing tips and techniques for becoming a better reader and, of course, recommending great books along the way.

April 25, 2023 | Nonfiction  
5.25 x 8.25, 240pp | \$22.95  
9781771965415 (trade paper)

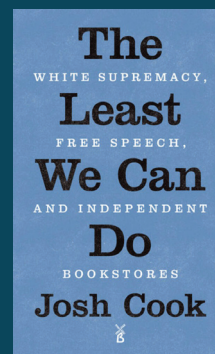
#### COMP TITLES:

*Against Amazon*, Jorge Carrión  
*A Factotum in the Book Trade*, Marius Kociejowski  
*In Praise of Good Bookstores*, Jeff Deutsch

**Josh Cook** is a bookseller and co-owner at Porter Square Books in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He is the author of the critically acclaimed postmodern detective novel *An Exaggerated Murder* and his fiction, criticism, and poetry have appeared widely. He grew up in Lewiston, Maine, and lives in Somerville, Massachusetts.

## FROM *THE LEAST WE CAN DO*

In conversations with booksellers, I’ve heard it argued that booksellers have an obligation to withhold judgement, that it is not really our job to tell people whether a book is “good” or not, and that it is a violation of our social contract to pass any kind of judgement on books or judge people based on what books they buy. I absolutely agree with the latter idea and very broadly—and when phrased in certain ways—agree with the idea that booksellers should not dictate which books are “good.” But I don’t really see why choosing not to stock a book because it is written by a White supremacist is fundamentally different from all of the other reasons we have to not stock a book. A customer will have to ask for it at the desk if it’s a publisher we don’t get good terms from, or if it’s about a non-local sports team, or if the book has gone out of print, like the Dr. Seuss books that were pulled by his estate because they contained racist images, or any of the dozens of different reasons why a specific book might not be on the shelves at a particular time. It is also somewhat difficult to hear a principle of non-judgement from an industry that judged and shamed romance readers and writers for decades.



*The Least We Can Do: White Supremacy, Free Speech, and Independent Bookstores*  
5.25 x 8.5, 48pp  
\$7.95 | 9781771964654 (pamphlet)



# RICHARD SANGER

## WAY TO GO

An jubilant, irreverent, generous collection by a poet facing terminal illness.



April 4, 2023 | Poetry  
5.5 x 8.5, 72pp  
\$19.95 | 9781771965538  
(trade paper)

#### COMP TITLES:

*The Affirmations*, Luke Hathaway  
*Four Reincarnations*, Max Ritvo  
*Dark Woods*, Richard Sanger

Following his *New York Times* Best of the Year *Dark Woods*, Richard Sanger's fourth collection is a clear-eyed and big-hearted chronicle of terminal illness and a joyful inventory of the passions of a life well lived. Understated, tender, and archly funny, this collection comes on the heels of his chapbook, *Fathers at Hockey*, a gritty and magical glimpse into an ice rink, which was selected as a favorite book of the year by *The Walrus*. *Way to Go* takes that magic and runs—becoming a retrospective and an inventory of the passions of a life well lived. Akin to the work of Ross Gay and Ada Limon, reminiscent of Frank O'Hara's *Lunch Poems*, Sanger creates a catalog of things that he loves, has loved, and still dreams he may yet find a way of loving.



**Richard Sanger** grew up in Ottawa and lives in Toronto. He has published three poetry collections and a chapbook; his third collection, *Dark Woods*, was named one of the top ten poetry books of 2018 by the *New York Times*.

### Hop Hornbeam

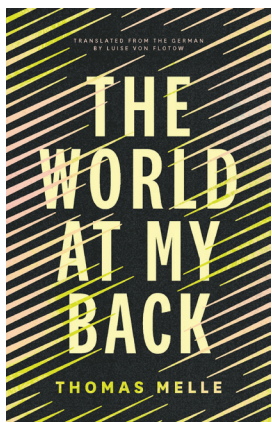
It's March, tender one, and still  
you cling to your feelings,  
these precious leaves of yours  
you won't let go. Remember the fall  
when the big trees unbuttoned,  
unburdened themselves of all  
that gaudy trash they dash off?  
How it fluttered down and collected  
in the ditches and the gutters,  
yellow and orange and hectic red?  
You skulked in their shade,  
tut-tutting at their profligate ways,  
the wayhow they spend themselves  
before it's even November,  
as you wait, wait for the right breeze  
to launch your little babies...  
You'll be like Borges' scholar,  
so enchanted by the magic  
of words on a page, you end up  
leading a life as thin and pale  
as the paper between your fingers—  
these feelings whispers of worn parchment,  
the leaves you can't bear to part with  
that tug and tatter in the breeze.

# THOMAS MELLE

## THE WORLD AT MY BACK

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY LUISE VON FLOWTOW

A writer's wrenching, no-holds-barred confession about his experiences with bipolar disorder.



Feb 21, 2023 | Memoir  
5.25 x 8.25, 288pp  
\$22.95 | 9781771964517  
(trade paper)

COMP TITLES:  
*Darkness Visible,*  
William Styron  
*The Collected Schizophrenias,*  
Esme Weijun Wang  
*Brain on Fire,*  
Susannah Cahalan

Thomas Melle, a successful young novelist and playwright, suddenly sells off his library without knowing why he's doing it. His personal life disintegrates as his behaviour becomes more irrational. Drunken frenzies, wild imaginings, fantasies about sex with stars, broken relationships, professional scandals, scuffles with the police, and enforced stays on psych wards. take over Melle's life. Possibly the most, precise, intense account ever written of how it feels to suffer from bipolar disorder, *The World at My Back* is a triumph of truth-telling and a masterpiece of elegant literary expression. Balancing exquisite writing with fearless confrontations with brutally self-destructive actions, this book is a wrenching confession and a moving description of the search for emotional balance.

Born in Bonn, Germany, **Thomas Melle** studied at the University of Tübingen, University of Texas at Austin, and the Free University of Berlin. The bestselling *The World at My Back*, a finalist for the German Book Prize, has been translated into eighteen languages.

### PRAISE FOR *THE WORLD AT MY BACK*

"Books written out of great emotional distress are often embarrassing. They are rarely great literature. Thomas Melle's book is great literature because he pulls it off without a single false note." *DEUTSCHLANDFUNK* (German National Radio)

"Haunting insights into a bipolar identity as seen from the inside ... Precisely because it is not a question of fiction—even if there is much talk of literature, even of a 'failed novel of education'—but of a poetic of the authentic, *The World at My Back* is an impressive document." *FRANKFURTER ALLEGEMEINE ZEITUNG*

"The author of the book is Thomas Melle, his book is called *The World at My Back*, and it tells of a much greater conflict and a much greater shame than you, as a reader, will probably ever feel ... Manic-depressive disorder is the tragedy of Thomas Melle's life. That we can read about it in this book in this way is a wrenching literary event." *DIE ZEIT*

# RODRIGO REY ROSA

## THE COUNTRY OF TOÓ

TRANSLATED FROM THE SPANISH BY STEPHEN HENIGHAN

This sumptuously written thriller asks probing questions about how we live with each other and with our planet.

The Cobra is a hard man in a brutal world. Expelled from El Salvador after a drug bust and working as a Guatemalan businessman's enforcer, he meets and comes to admire Polo, a human rights campaigner who defends the Mayan people. When the Cobra's boss orders him to murder Polo, a last-minute stab of conscience brings him into conflict with drug-dealing oligarchs. Now a marked man, he's offered a chance to escape to a remote Mayan community facing down its own assassin: the encroaching mining companies who want the land regardless of their impact on the planet. Can the Cobra change his solipsistic ways and learn to defend a culture caught in the crosshairs of another kind of battle? By the writer Roberto Bolaño has called the most rigorous of his generation, Rodrigo Rey Rosa's *The Country of Toó* is gripping thriller about power and redemption.

Jan 24, 2023 | Fiction  
5.25 x 8.25, 240pp | \$22.95  
9781771965149 (trade paper)

#### COMP TITLES:

*The Fallen*, Carlos Manuel Alvarez  
*His Name Was Death*, Rafael Bernal  
*Human Matter*, Rodrigo Rey Rosa

**Rodrigo Rey Rosa** is the author of five collections of short stories and more than a dozen novels that have been published in sixteen languages. Rey Rosa has been awarded Guatemala's national literature prize, China's Best Foreign Book Award and, for his life's work, Chile's prestigious José Donoso Prize.

### PRAISE FOR RODRIGO REY ROSA

"Intense ... By the end of this novel you feel glad to have come out on the other side and carry the hope that Rodrigo Rey Rosa, those close to him, and his fellow countrymen will do so, too." *NEW YORK JOURNAL OF BOOKS*

"Rodrigo Rey Rosa creates stories of mythic proportions." *SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE*

"[*Human Matter's*] exploration of the history of violence and secrecy in Central America has obvious relevance to today's politics, but the tale of a writer trying to understand the truth behind the things he's seeing gives the novel a resounding, universal echo." *VANITY FAIR*

"To read him is to learn how to write and is also an invitation to the pure pleasure of allowing oneself to be borne along by sinister or fantastic stories ... Rey Rosa is the most rigorous writer of my generation, and at the same time the clearest, the one who weaves his stories together best, the most brilliant of them all." **ROBERTO BOLAÑO**

# KRISTINA BRESNEN

## PASCAL'S FIRE

An unnamed speaker navigates a world where God comes in the shape of a cardinal, speaks in the voice of Georgia O’Keeffe, and paints the desert with bones.

Driven by sound, heartbreak, and a baffling sense of the limits and possibilities of language, the speaker of this poetic prose meditation sets out into a strange, dream-like wilderness where lyric and narrative meet, time dissolves, and figures as various as Moses, the apostle Paul, Virginia Woolf, Blaise Pascal, Flaubert’s Félicité, Zora Neale Hurston, and Hestia gather in a colloquy to form a “cloud of witnesses.” Born out of a region of stuttering prophets, preachers, the gift of tongues, the psalms of praise, lament, and imprecation, *Pascal’s Fire* negotiates the pressure and wonder of the unknown and the tension and play of belief and disbelief. Poised at the edge of speech and sight, the speaker tries to puzzle out the risk, embarrassment, vulnerability, and instability of words as they brush up against grief, a dying woman, desert heat, wind, thirst, and the sound of an IV drip.

April 4, 2023 | Poetry  
5.25 x 8.25, 72 pp  
\$19.95 | 9781771965439  
(trade paper)

COMP TITLES:  
*The Debt*, Andreae Callanan  
*The Affirmations*, Luke Hathaway  
*Braille Rainbow*, Mike Barnes



**Kristina Bresnen** has published poems in Canada and the US. She is from Montreal and currently lives in British Columbia. *Pascal’s Fire* is her first book.

### FROM *PASCAL'S FIRE*

I’ll never know. I’ll never see what Pascal saw. I see Hestia in her hospital bed. I see blisters on her back the size of hockey pucks. I see a black bile I mistake for blood and wipe it with a kleenex. “Oh, that’s just what’s left of her stomach, love,” the nurse tells me when I ask. I forget all my learning. Forget grammar, syntax. I feel a burning in my throat and hear the dry-erase brush swish against the whiteboard. It is half-past ten in the evening, smell of disinfectant in the air. I pace the boards of my raft and drift unmoored without pole or rudder. I try and see what Hestia sees, but can’t. I watch her turn and turn and bind her blazing wounds with gauze.

I make rough stitchery of conversion.

§

John Berryman:

Who can search Thee out?

except Isaiah & Pascal, who saw.

I dare not ask that vision...

I dare not ask it either.

STEVEN HEIGHTON  
JEANNIE MARSHALL  
CHRISTOPHE BERNARD  
STEPHEN MARCHE  
ROY JACOBSEN  
JOSH COOK  
RICHARD SANGER  
THOMAS MELLE  
RODRIGO REY ROSA  
KRISTINA BRESNEN

