



The Center for Literary Publishing  
9105 Campus Delivery  
Department of English  
Colorado State University  
Fort Collins, CO 80523-9105  
970.491.5449  
creview@colostate.edu  
<https://coloradoreview.colostate.edu>

## BOOK REVIEW EDITORS

Dan Beachy-Quick (poetry)  
Nicole VanderLinden (fiction & nonfiction)

## BOOK REVIEW GUIDELINES

The primary function of *Colorado Review*'s book reviews is to bring attention to works that might not otherwise be noticed by the mainstream press. To that end, we're interested in reviews of books from **small, independent publishers and university presses** and books from **new and emerging writers**. We accept previously unpublished reviews of **poetry and short story collections, novels, and literary nonfiction** that, generally, have come out within the last year. We do not review work that has been self-published. All book reviews are featured on our website (though not in the print journal): <https://coloradoreview.colostate.edu>. Reviewers are compensated with a one-year subscription to *Colorado Review*.

While there is certainly a space for negative book reviews, *Colorado Review* is not that space. If the book we've sent you is something you don't like—something about which you absolutely can't find anything positive to say—then please let us know. We'd be happy to send you a new book to review. This is not to say you should refrain from offering criticism, but simply that **we wish to recommend the books we choose for review**.

Genuine critical integrity requires profound generosity; **thinking about a book is a form of thankfulness for it**. A successful book review knows when thinking and thanking are a single gesture, the review a form of deliberation in the deepest sense, bending the freedom of the reviewer's mind to the necessity embedded in the book. It is humble and necessary work, one that furthers the gifted economy that for centuries has nourished literature by adding to and participating in the larger literary community.

The review should not only **treat the book's content critically**, but also give **a good sense of what the book is about**. While you should avoid spoilers, it's important to convey thematic elements and general plot; in short, offer a well-crafted **blend of summary and analysis**.

Please note that when we say we're looking for **book reviews**, we mean just that—**not scholarly criticism**. If you're unfamiliar with the distinction, please look to such publications as *Rain Taxi*, *Bookforum*, or the review section of the *New York Times* to get an idea of what we're looking for. The review should provide a sense of what the book is about and should be accessible to any reader of literature. If your review is rife with academic jargon, it's probably not what we're looking for.

Please don't send us a review of your friend's/colleague's/professor's/student's book. While you may have met the author at a conference or are perhaps even an acquaintance, **you should not have a relationship with the author** that will compromise your ability to praise and/or criticize the work objectively.

In summary, some guiding principles for *Colorado Review*'s book reviews:

- An effort to see the vision of a book across its entirety—**holistic**
- An effort to work on behalf of the book—**generous**
- An effort to ensure the review is accessible to other readers (and to this end, we encourage writing in the first person)—**accessible**

## QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

- What can you assume about the audience and their knowledge? What will the reader need to know in order to understand what the book is about and who the author is?
- How does the book add to the larger conversation? That is, how might you put it in context of either the author's other work or the genre in which the author is writing?
- What additional information might you refer to (e.g., other critics, writers, the reader's knowledge of a literary movement) to help further illuminate the work?
- Why are you writing about this particular book and no other? What's unique about it?
- What possible problems (e.g., overdone tropes and topics) might the reader encounter that you can either dismiss or acknowledge for them, keeping in mind that we are ultimately recommending all of our reviewed books?

## EXAMPLES OF BOOK REVIEWS

- Fiction: <https://coloradoreview.colostate.edu/reviews/silence-is-my-mother-tongue/>
- Nonfiction: <https://coloradoreview.colostate.edu/reviews/the-blessing/>

## FORMATTING AND OTHER MISCELLANY

- Aim for 750 to 1,000 words in your review.
- Please submit in Times New Roman, 12 point.
- We follow The Chicago Manual of Style.
- With your review, provide your current mailing address, phone number, e-mail, and a bio note.
- At the top of your review, please include the following publication information, formatted as follows:

*Cloud Study*, by Susan Jones-Carlson  
Table Press, 2021  
reviewed by Fiona Edwards

- Please triple check any quotations carefully.
- The body of your review should be double spaced, but longer extracts (block quotations) should be set off using Word's "increase indent" function (that is, please don't indent them with tabs or spaces) and single spaced.