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BOOK REVIEW EDITORS

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BOOK REVIEW GUIDELINES: POETRY

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 We accept previously unpublished reviews of **poetry collections** that, generally, have come out within the last year.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 (but not in the print journal): <https://coloradoreview.colostate.edu/book-reviews/>. 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 another book. 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**, conveying thematic elements and, when relevant, general narrative arc—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*

Traditional Book Reviews

FORMATTING AND OTHER MISCELLANY

- Aim for **750 to 1000 words** in your review.
- Please submit in **Times New Roman, 12 point**.
- We follow *The Chicago Manual of Style*.
- Submit your review through Submittable (no fee) with your current mailing address, e-mail, and 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, 2026
reviewed by Fiona Edwards

- Please **triple check any quotations** carefully and provide page numbers for each within the body of your review.
- The body of your review should be **double spaced**, but 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.
- Please **avoid** using parenthetical title references following poetry extracts, such as:

Without a dream of trains
I took your only suitcase.
(**"I Left You in Paris"**)

- Or introducing extracts without providing context, such as:

From **"I Left You in Paris"**:

Without a dream of trains
I took your only suitcase . . .

- **Poem titles should instead be incorporated into the text**, typically before the extract. Often the sentence introducing an extract will contain the title reference and a small synopsis that situates the extract you choose to quote:

Example: In **"End of Night"** we get a withering image of our intellectual solipsism:

Rising from the bay
the moon through my socket

Example: A similar shadow is cast in the opening of the poem **"Autumn Threshold"**:

Bees by the clover
ditch gravel and weeds

- When quoting lines of poetry within your text (rather than setting off as an extract), please use **one space on either side of the slash** to indicate line breaks.

Example: William Carlos Williams opens his poem with **"So much depends / upon . . ."**

Omnibus Book Reviews

An omnibus book review is a critical review that explores a theme, concern, or theory across **three to eight poetry** collections, at least one of which should have been published within the past two years at time of submission. This form can help us understand in real time how distinct literary styles emerge; how books exist within a shared ecosystem of ideas and forms; and how literature interacts with history as it's being made. The review should have a clear thesis, relevant context, and an argument that can unfold across and through multiple texts. For cross-genre omnibus reviews, query our editors first.

FORMAT AND OTHER MISCELLANY

- Aim for **1500 to 3000** words in your review.
- Please submit in **Times New Roman, 12 point**.
- We follow *The Chicago Manual of Style*.
- At least one book must have been published in the past two years.
- Submit your review through Submittable (no fee) with your current mailing address, e-mail, and bio note.

“Book Notes” Book Reviews

This short-form, template-based review offers an opportunity for reviewers to say what they found interesting, surprising, challenging, and moving in a briefer format. The goal is to re-create the immediacy and intimacy of reading a poetry collection and wanting to share it with someone nearby. This form is also intended to make book reviewing more sustainable for reviewers, editors, and presses. Our hope is that the compressed form allows more people to review books and more books to be reviewed. In doing so, we are able to highlight the work of more presses and writers than the longer, critically inflected review form allows.

BOOK NOTES TEMPLATE

Include the following questions, along with answers, in your submission:

1. What this book cares about most:
2. Poems that moved me:
3. Lines that lingered:
4. Figurative language and formal feats:
5. This book is in conversation with:
6. Questions this book made me ask:
7. Who I would give this book to:

FORMAT AND OTHER MISCELLANY

- Aim for **500** words or fewer in your review.
- Please submit in **Times New Roman, 12 point**.
- We follow *The Chicago Manual of Style*.
- You can use bullet points or paragraph form for your responses. We may alter the formatting style of your response depending on WordPress's constraints.
- For “lines that lingered” you do not need to cite the page or poem from which the lines come.
- When quoting lines of poetry, please use one space on either side of the slash to indicate line breaks: “So much depends / upon . . .”
- Submit your review through Submittable (no fee) with your current mailing address, e-mail, and bio note.

EXAMPLES OF BOOK NOTES

- *A Real Man Would Have a Gun*, reviewed by C. E. Janecek: <https://coloradoreview.colostate.edu/reviews/a-real-man-would-have-a-gun/>
- *Rodeo*, reviewed by Lisa Higgs: <https://coloradoreview.colostate.edu/reviews/rodeo/>