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# Abigail Chabitnoy

## The Fallow Fields

I stole the air out of all the pockets leaving only a memory of water.

I took the glass washed on the beach but not enough to make a bottle to hold a letter.

Can I be a relic without field? can I be a seed a stone an aquifer with my head  
in the sand or mud | be things as they may  
dirt turning to people and people to dirt.

Can I be a history worth turning over in the sun?

Can you remember what it's like to not be at war?

Every word a stone I can't lift from my chest. a weight I can't let go.

I haven't looked at the whale's bone since I brought it home. no sea to see here.

The truth is I could tell / he liked my sister and I didn't want to shoot the otters either way. I was glad to see the lanky bear, the small whales, stretched through glass. the host of eagles common as sparrows. One could afford such thoughts standing as far as one can stand. unless you wanted to follow the sky to its logical conclusion.

It is romantic not to think someone paid for all this before.

The truth is I miss the trees back east, the closeness of unmoved bodies. It is romantic.

## You're Going to be Lonely if You Turn to Salt Each Woman Who Ever Looked Back

Don't trust me next  
to the water. Like Lot's wife  
my center starts to itch, my body  
already salt.  
She deserves a name, don't you  
think? I ask you  
what would happen  
if I let go. No, not let go.  
I ask you what would happen  
if I took a running start and  
jumped into that body.  
It was only a river  
the canyon small and  
hardly wi'd'ing  
and I was already  
accustomed  
to be wind.  
That is, I usually  
knew when to stop.

Did you hear  
about the woman  
who drove herself into the sea?  
Tired into the waves

and all with her children  
buckled safely?  
I think  
I would fly first.  
I hold that  
image of me  
with sky in my arms  
just before  
the water breaks,  
breaks again  
as I go under.

*You'd drown*, you say, and walk back to the car.  
I look back to the water, gold honey earth mixed to seed where the rapid meet.  
Dust to dust.  
Then salt.  
The sea still a possibility.



## What Not to Shoot if There Are Questions

The Department is investigating the death of an albino deer found near a tree (stand). Confirmed the deer had been shot in the gut. Could have been dead as long as a week. Deer shot in that location can travel quite a distance before they die.

It's very unfortunate this deer was shot. But white coats stick out without snow.

Another hunter turned in a body that same week.

That they are white is merely the result of a genetic defect. He says he never saw the body until it was dead.

It begs the question. But mothers too are disappearing.

The Department has said it feels sad about it. (Kind of sad.) The President of the conservation Club says it will keep the body on display in the clubhouse to teach young hunters what not to shoot if there are questions.

At least, where deer are concerned.

## Reintroduced Female. With Teeth. Approach With Caution.

Sometimes I think I'd like to be one. A wolf. A female  
wolf will cower pretending to be afraid meanwhile  
protect the male's throat. Only sometimes  
the instinct is to kill.

reasonable fear— I mean to say see me. see me through the skin of your teeth.

see me see me see me the rising sea

How did we get here again?

I want to be in your stories. I want to know everything about the movement  
of sharks. where the young are born. where they learn to feed.  
What is the hierarchy, precisely?

(Did you really think I'd prefer a songbird mother?)

A prominent jawbone comes in handy  
in a pinch: a sled, a sledge, a hammer.  
a charm.  
a bed to grow all my teeth.

Take a moment of silence, add it to the last moment of silence, the next  
moment of silence, the next. Set it next to my too-full mouth and compare wingspan. I'm all out

of song and feathers and even  
the dead have been taken from us. Peel back the skin  
where it opens  
cut away the body.

Don't tell me what I can and can't be. vindictive or entombed. those of us with all our teeth  
must stick together. call it climate change.

We are looking for information that will lead us to her killer,

the twelve year alpha female with fur as white as snow

Call it globe warming. call it poaching. call it murder. call it murder.

This was not a hunter. Even Fox got that much right. We're looking for the shooter.

Mother, mother, Prudence, you'll be pleased to know all the sharks in my dreams  
are female.



Photo: Kylan Rice

# Sarah Green

## The Plain Is

simply that

ochre palm  
cradling lack

sky  
stretched awe—  
full  
empty

O

to pour myself  
out  
lay my  
self

bare

be a field—  
—u n f o l d i n g

# Jacob Kahn

## Crystal Geyser

I try to read the bluff  
at the basin and bank  
at the reef to sing the  
countriest song the earth  
avails, "*and pencil it  
thence,*" on sandstone  
I suppose just like  
how it sounds. Remarkable  
how much wind fleeces  
a realm traces back  
the stunted formation  
"amphitheatrical" "ambrosia  
in the rock," spires  
cathedrals, an oblique resting place  
to bask w/out import  
End State Maintenance  
by rule-of-thumb  
I will sit as the form  
of a person  
sits, stationary, compleat  
on *hoodooed* beach, reverie  
by valence fixed

Have you ever seen an Arby's within  
Subway within Chevron  
without signage? Purportedly  
what was Shady Acres  
still is: standard compression  
and relief, wing beat, and  
in smaller font: Thanks! Knew  
a dude carried mail put coffee  
in a vase  
to coast  
without expectation  
Salina to LaSal  
to a town called Grand Junction  
full of benches  
never made it  
Place this blob  
and forget it  
and hope for the best

beneath cliffs  
Spooked a goose from the grain  
and a white-throated wren  
and a flicker in the tamarisk  
sharpening its beak on the last

bit of red bark, that's some  
one's job? To dig for what  
feasibility there is, a buttery spread  
of extenuation  
called tailings  
black compote  
can fly

a lost form of embroidery  
till(s) the wave  
cold hands  
no one believes  
resemble books no one  
believes *anything* he says  
exaggeratedly rotating  
on a "living" parade mount  
of cows, the living  
definition of perplexity, six  
by the bank, ten on the hill  
between honest glib and reckless toil  
and when's it go off  
collecting cartonite shards  
I'm too afraid to get close  
a kind of orange ash



our dillydally avails

Granted phosphor not  
withstanding a crosswind  
blows any kind of tea leaf  
back into town  
to survey the slope  
to settle the base  
to charter the mounds  
extend the hill  
in a variety of twos  
two plates of loaf  
transform to potash  
evaporating the leachate  
in large iron pots  
from *sea* came spring  
magpies on a muddy  
spit, motionless cows  
“the tender unsown  
increase in melons”  
on a purely lyric level  
I’m not sure what to call  
geyser rock—you mean

*Devonian shale?*

I do mean sea  
but, like, swell  
the dying faithful  
to its Western slope  
and herself a treasure  
house to its memories  
to feed the horse  
its customary pails  
Ink's family built cabins  
on the Harris bottoms  
where a horse slipped  
you can relate  
to incidents that  
irk or reveal, or refuse  
the words, get clean

of perusal to mark  
the speech inclination of  
constant pause—is that  
a midwinter bullfrog? Fourteen  
year old lawyer marches down  
dirt road, what a dull life in  
a bare branch against a red cliff

of formless convenience  
living lowers the land  
cost to jerk the  
pan level. Both eagles  
now stuck, the river shifts—

*An hour later we run a long rapid and stop at its foot to examine some interesting rocks,  
deposited by mineral springs that at one time must have existed here, but which are no longer  
flowing.*

*—John Wesley Powell*

## Temporary Summons

Parceled as to weaken  
the feasibility of a given life  
you know, how a loon

swallows a pill, selfless  
as rare stone? My love  
changing back into me

auks the question in bloom:  
do dragonflies parry each  
summons even after death?

Through narrow channels,  
bordered by lichen,  
lands on my leg—if a

lie itself is proof—  
no such lie intact.



# Jory Mickelson

## Blue, Consuming Blue

*after Robert Hass*

If I said—recalling winter  
the creek's deeper shade of blue  
in its white-edged bed—

If I said blue jay on a dark branch  
of spruce, flaring tail  
spread at the lynx's approach  
in the vintage print—

If I said glacial, hydrangea in the shade

or tile in the cumin-scented kitchen  
of his blocky California house

If I said his lips tasted of raspberry

If he presses them, cold  
to my neck until the skin  
of my throat puckers

dripped popsicle, wrist to mouth

How not to devour a man  
whose look says he wants to be

## anthem

hoarfrost / splendor  
of the grass / 'o  
radiant king

thrush's throat / estuary  
and bay / eloquent  
dusk song

sea glass / cormorant's bending  
neck / your hand / cupped  
to gather water

field at the end  
of spring / nest  
of winds / archipelago

horse's left haunch / rough  
cut lumber / the sleep  
of an ant's wing

deer mouse / thimbleful  
of seed / velvet  
worn antler

false mallow / rumble-bellied  
toad / three willows  
along the banks

# David Mucklow

## Rockport

I stood on the Colorado/Wyoming border, looked east and imagined a line, but only saw a lone tree, and to the west a wind farm just inside Colorado, on the Wyoming side an abandoned strip club, and lottery sales business in a rotting pink building, a big sign saying *Play Here* and here at this stone house, small stones painted yellow – no quarry near, maybe from an ancient river bed. Across the road, a Weld County Road and Bridge maintenance shop, and an old grater next to a pile of gravel.

maybe here a bar before  
empty of industry empty winter branches quiver  
wind sways the power lines



## Keota

What might be left of a house, when it's not meant to last? How long ago did people leave these homes, let them fade into houses, fade into wood and let the willow grow through the porch? This street name is Roanoke, the bright green street sign mocks the fading yellows of once bright houses, a general store, a mechanic's shop. People still live here, people have always lived here, but I don't see any people here now. There are two RVs and a fleet of tanker trailers and semis below the decommissioned water tower. On the horizon, a plume of dust behind a fracking truck.

three walls of prairie sandstone remain  
sun lighting the empty doorway who took the roof  
with them who decided to never come

## still, the west

before Mill Creek traps  
in a reservoir the red  
line on the jaw  
of a cutbow

## still, the west

can a rest stop turned  
ruin be more  
than a gravel  
pit or a grave



Photo: Chris Mulder

# Katie Naughton

## warming ending what it may you persist

was time what gathered you in and time what  
sends you back out the summer returned  
in green in fields in insects when we walk  
evenings after eating after heat  
and snow on peaks past the plain we didn't make  
it far enough did not leave our time like wind  
when we leave across the plains again late  
evening the traffic still around the town  
the gas stations and what else they sell late  
the fast food chains the light changes we leave  
the night behind a Bruce Springsteen song  
we cannot bear to sit around a fire  
with each other and sing we drive each other  
up the closest hill we say what kills us

is what I take you for the sunflower hill  
in Nebraska a man stops his pickup  
like it is god's country on his face the yellow high  
of all those flowers to tell me about it  
the rain was different this year this year  
we made a lake where our faces should have been  
the vacation and the ease of motor oil my heart  
should be sage on the dry edge of dying  
my god's country that sweet in the sun  
of change the worn metal inevitability  
these hills traded on the streets of Omaha  
and string the wire pave the road the disaster  
comes in sunflowers and purple aster  
every mundane Sunday while our day breaks

# Kylan Rice

## Regional Crown (4)

Something never thought could run out runs out  
Let's keep this  
in common at least  
less common passion than common lack  
sharing that  
the subterranean no further renderable half  
At last a loose arrow  
not that I don't arrive but that there wasn't a place  
in mind in the first place not even a premise  
for a paradox Funny how  
Keota is two towns at once The actual town part  
long hollowed out The drillers fully mobile in trailers  
The living doing the haunting  
and the living and the dying

## Keota

A natural snow fence of tough pine shores up the road. Back home,

those we planted alongside fence-line to block the neighbor's sight  
have flourished, forest-worthy, won back when they were saplings

for crossing finish in the Pear Blossom run, a footrace held each year  
just ahead of all the orchards gone from hoar to wake, the valley sea

again. Pebbles spray our hood and windshield, semis barrel down  
the unpaved grassland grid, hauling back the onshore empties. Here

the sea is just beneath. Splits, black bud, from a wellhead. Nobody  
bothers with porch-steps, let alone a shade-tree, so doors just hang  
in the air. When you leave in the morning, the false depth jars  
the heart, like this might be the time you leave for good. We take

photos, coasting, from the driver's seat, of town the way it will be  
when you do: the way you found it: all the glass still gone, sofas still  
frothing cotton and box-springs, here and there a buried fiberoptic  
line, new root, seeing as there was nothing better to do to pass time  
but pipe in the ether, too.



## Regional Crown (6)

Go through enough topography  
and you get to a place  
you can only use the topos of  
inexpressibility  
to fit your head around Beyond  
description itself description  
Elusion making up the place Less the place itself  
than its elusion  
I'm after  
Elysium anywhere can be  
Grain elevators of Ault A Unique Little Town if you unpack  
the cipher its name is  
The fields of wheat of Ault  
concealed within them

## middle America (Wedding of the Waters)

it doesn't matter how bad I want to see Thermopolis  
Wyoming or the Wedding of the Waters there where  
Wind River blurs into the Bighorn the fact is no bus  
goes there no regional service the closest Greyhound  
stop as far away as Casper the fact is it can't be accessed  
where fact is fact as far as you can't reach it as far as  
there's horizon to it as far as I can feel it's real it has to  
feel just a little farther there being no way in actuality  
to grasp it that line in the water where the Wind's a mouth  
and the Bighorn begins where a river's made of lines  
as much as distance is as much as outer limits look as  
even as a shoulder settled in a stock if there are any lines  
it indicates a deeper thing a riffle David tells me means  
a stretch of gobbled rock means a warmer curvature  
where browns will gather though you cannot see them  
there that doesn't mean they aren't take this fact on  
faith put your line where light is cresting landing stay  
put the way the mayfly stays that is for a time no thought  
for what's next or what mouth has opened up below  
but for the barest falter in the light.

# Ben Rutherford

## *from* **Fire Journal**

Neighbors keep remarking how impervious we were  
living in a neighborhood, and everyone seems ready to defend  
this feeling. In a foehn,  
violence and suicide rise. Depression  
kicks in. Until living with a raw autumn  
wind means being exposed  
to the body's buried twitches; a hum we're accustomed to  
hearing noticed only in its absence, leaving  
the brick stoop we're all standing on, shading  
our eyes, except it's night, the threat  
distant and irrepressible as a phone at the end of a hallway  
that doesn't exist. What would it take to make  
any gesture at all? And not fall victim to the image  
I've established as the past.  
I thought it was the start of rain.  
It's a change in my breath, abiding to  
terrestrial time, as airborne embers  
migrating across California  
light fresh fires, not far from our neighborhood. This is the official  
report. Tomorrow it will still be there.

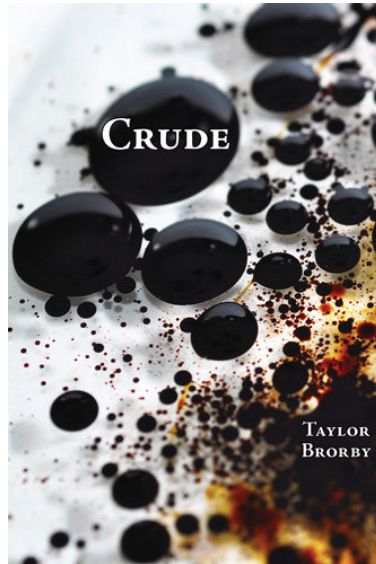


Photo: Kylan Rice

# Claire Tranchino

## Review of *Crude* by Taylor Brorby

Ice Cube Press, 2017



How do we make sense of a human damaged landscape? Taylor Brorby explores this question in his first book of poetry, *Crude* (Ice Cube Press, 2017). Published in the midst of the Bakken oil boom, Brorby negotiates the shifting landscape of his home state, North Dakota, as pumpjacks and oil flares mutate the plains. His work co-editing the impressive anthology *Fracture: Essays, Poems, and Stories on Fracking in America* with Stefanie Brook Trout addresses a similar set of concerns. In *Crude*, poems take the form of eulogies (and almost-eulogies, such as a poem dedicated to the endangered pallid sturgeon), odes, and praise poems for the landscape and its inhabitants in response to its changing conditions. Focusing on the Bakken region opens up historical matter interrelated to the increased fracking in the last decade: histories of the Sioux tribes, colonial settlement, exploration by Lewis and Clark, the genocide of indigenous peoples, and Brorby's own experience living in North Dakota. For Brorby, these

histories converge in the land: “the infinite / rests in finitude” (15). *Crude* is a rendering of these various histories and contexts and a reimagining of how to consciously live within them.

There is a fusion of the self and the world in *Crude*. Many of the poems are written from the standpoint of the poet-as-speaker and occasionally the “I” transgresses the self and

becomes part of the environment. In the following excerpt from “Badlands,” for instance, the material condition of the earth and the body are simultaneous:

Ripped like an abscessed tooth  
 from a jaw. This land, raw and real,  
 pushed and pressed to give up  
 sacred blood: oil. Blood of the land.  
 My blood. No separation. (81)

Moving beyond singular, human subjectivity, the excerpted lines prompt us to consider the environment and the body as always connected. Can Donna Haraway’s question “why should our bodies end at our skin” serve as an affirmative response to Brorby’s writing? There might be an ecological ethics that comes with such thinking. Perhaps a consciousness of the interconnected nature of body/earth can help us forge more compassionate relationships to the land and those that dwell on it. Such a relationship is manifested in “Question for a Butte,” in which the speaker asks the land:

What is it like  
 to be slashed, to have  
 your throat slit, to bleed  
 rock from your veins of coal? (37)

Or in “Delight,” when the speaker wonders “*What does the bison think?*” (73). In these moments, Brorby reconceives interactions to nonhuman beings in our ecosystem. He thus resists an anthropocentric world view which positions non-human beings as potential assets instead of equal agents in a shared environment.

Brorby's privileging of beings typically devalued by settler-colonialism and capitalism is a radical poetic gesture. Equally significant is Brorby's effort to reverse the dominant knowledges transmitted by these structures. Take "America," a series of letters to "the Captains of Industry" and "the Government officials" that degrades their practices of "selling out for the quick profit / convenience / and short-term gain" with humor and seriousness (67). At the turn of the poem, Brorby addresses Native Americans. He deliberately shifts the language that often frames their histories:

To the Native Americans,

I learned your sacred sites by different  
names. Learned that my ancestors *settled*—  
or so we thought—the prairie, forced  
Sitting Bull to hand over his rifle, the way  
of life forever changed, altered, broken. (67)

Brorby disrupts violent narratives that position natives as without agency or unable to exist without colonial settlement to "civilize" their communities. Writing with a deep sense of accountability, he uses his poetry to take a visible stance against the subjugation of Native Americans.

For Brorby, an "end time" in which pump jacks rise over dry land, to paraphrase "Gospel," is not an option. While radical change is unlikely to come from a poem, poets have the opportunity to write the world anew — and Brorby does just this.

His poetry enacts a small-scale activism in which ways of living in coalition with the earth are imagined. (Intersecting with his writing life is his work traveling the country to speak on hydraulic fracking and fossil fuels). The final poem in the collection, “Credo,” imagines the plains transformed as a utopia. Interconnectedness manifests at the level of syntax, as the poem takes the form of one continuous sentence. Whitmanian in his approach, Brorby writes right alongside the “single grain of sand” and “lump of lignite” to imagine a more democratic relationship with the beings of our ecosystem:

In the beginning God whispered the world into being and the  
bluegills I love came into being and the meadowlarks I love  
rattled their throats across the sage scented prairie because a song,  
desperate to come out, was inside their wind-whipped bodies, and  
the bison wallowed in that gray-colored mud... (88)

In our current social, political, and environmental context, the world in this poem feels nearly impossible to manifest. Yet, Brorby asks us to “[r]isk hope,” as he writes in “Eulogy,” in order to begin to imagine the possibility of a world in which our relationship to the land and to each other is renewed (32). Brorby has already made important contributions to thinking in ecopoetics with his premiere collection of poems, *Crude*. I am looking forward to seeing what insights come from *Coal and Oil*, his forthcoming memoir (Milkweed Editions, 2019).





# Contributors

**Abigail Chabitnoy** earned her MFA in poetry at Colorado State University and was a 2016 Peripheral Poets fellow. Her poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Hayden's Ferry Review*, *Boston Review*, *Tin House*, *Gulf Coast*, *Pleiades*, *Tinderbox Poetry Journal*, and *Red Ink*, among others, and she has written reviews for *Colorado Review* and the *Volta* blog. She is a member of the Tangirnaq Native Village in Kodiak, Alaska, grew up in Pennsylvania, and currently resides in Colorado. Her debut poetry collection, *How to Dress a Fish*, was just released from Wesleyan University Press.

**Sarah Green** is currently an MFA candidate in poetry at Colorado State University. She received her MA in social work from the University of Chicago and works as a psychotherapist. Her work has previously appeared in *Ghost Proposal* and *Eratio*.

**Jacob Kahn** is a bookseller and editor and organizer and curator and lots of other things at E.M. Wolfman Books in Oakland, CA. He is a 2018 Frontier Fellow at Epicenter in Green River, Utah, a rural design studio and community-based artist residency. His writing can be found in *A Circuit of Yields* (Wolfman Books, 2014) as well as *Full Stop Quarterly*, *Open House*, *Elderly*, *Paradise Now*, *MARY*, and elsewhere.

**Jory Mickelson** is a queer, non-binary writer whose work has appeared in *Sixth Finch*, *The Puritan*, *Hawaii Pacific Review*, *Mid-American Review*, *Diode Poetry Journal*, *The Rumpus*, *Ninth Letter*, *Vinyl Poetry*, and other journals in the United States, Canada, and the UK. They are the recipient of an Academy of American Poets Prize and a Lambda Literary Fellow in Poetry. Their first full-length collection *WILDERNESS//KINGDOM* is forthcoming from Floating Bridge Press. They can be followed at [www.jorymickelson.com](http://www.jorymickelson.com).

**David Mucklow** was born and raised some miles north of the small town of Steamboat Springs, Colorado. He has an MFA in poetry from Colorado State University, and has had work published in *Wildness*, *Iron Horse Literary Journal*, *TIMBER*, and elsewhere.

**Chris Mulder** is a theologian, preacher, and amateur photographer from Colorado. Born and raised on the plains of Colorado, Chris has long enjoyed photographing the unique landscapes and experiences that come with rural living in Colorado.

**Katie Naughton** is a poet living in Buffalo, NY, where she is a student in the Poetics program at SUNY-Buffalo. She holds an MFA in creative writing from Colorado State University. Her poetry has been published or is forthcoming from in *jubilat*, *flag + void*, *Opon*, and Lambda Literary's Poetry Spotlight. Her poem "warming ending what it may you persist" won the Dan Liberthson Poetry Prize for SUNY-Buffalo through the Academy of American Poets College and University Poetry Prizes and was published online at poets.org.

**Kylan Rice** is pursuing his PhD in literature at UNC-Chapel Hill. His poetry and prose has been published in *Denver Quarterly*, *Kenyon Review Online*, *West Branch*, and elsewhere.

**John Rogers** is a retired international educator living in New Mexico.

**Ben Rutherford** is a poet from California. Poems and reviews have appeared in *Spork*, *Green Linden*, *Territory*, *The Volta*, and others. He is currently a PhD student in English at The University of Georgia, where he is an interdisciplinary fellow through the Lamar Dodd School of Art, and a contributing editor for *Green Linden*.

**Claire Tranchino** has yet to cross the 98<sup>th</sup> meridian, although she will be going hiking in Utah this spring with her best friend. A dweller of the northeast, she is looking forward to seeing red rocks and mountains that aren't glorified hills for the first time. Claire currently studies at the University at Buffalo, where she is an MA candidate in the Poetics Program. Her work has recently been published in *Seneca Review*.

