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Table of the Sun

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TABLE OF THE SUN

By

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Bachelor of Arts — English
Wayne State University
2014

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements of the

Master of Fine Arts — Creative Writing

Department of English
College of Liberal Arts
The Graduate College

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Abstract

My creative thesis is a collection of poems titled *Table of the Sun*. Each poem is an intimate interrogation of varied ecological, romantic, and/or political disasters and how the psyche develops through and out of them. Some poems are reckonings, and others work to heal trauma, heartache, clinical illness, and supernatural afflictions like those experienced by the Tarantati of Puglia. Some are combative, it's true. Tenderly, these poems fight for the transformations they need. Water is everywhere and it is multitudinous as an agent of destruction, cleansing, and change, and as a life-giver. My understanding of water has been informed by my readings of Romain Rolland's *oceanic feeling*, my trip to the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation to protest the Dakota Access Pipeline, and encounters with various bodies of water of the American West including the Colorado River, Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge's Crystal Spring, and Badwater Basin in Death Valley National Park. The collection was influenced by readings, lectures, and courses I've attended at UNLV, including the Spring 2015 Forms of Devotional Poetry class taught by Drs. Harp and Revell, and Professor Keelan's Fall 2015 Political Poetry Workshop. Other influences include the writers Bhanu Kapil, Jackie Wang, Anne Carson, Rebecca Solnit, and H.D..

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Plunge

“... our soul has no firm footing.” Hélène Cixous

What looks like air
isn't

It's one water
stacked on another water

What a lark—
Moving through water
that looks like air

Badwater

This desert sea-change
Water ancient in its one home
Such loyalty: is born just once. Then scattered in dark drops.
Then absorbed, by certain furs.

Every sea is not just a media I swim through
It is something I am made out of and then enter,
Like a throat cut gorgeously as nectarine

The sea's prehistory slices my thigh
Un-conceals my thigh from beneath my sliding skin
Storms enter the wound ruby, in serpentine clots
Atmosphere clears a room in my hair

I came here because I needed atmosphere
to fill my hands that were left, failing, by scorched rocks.
Cruellest, nature is the cruelest
in good beds

I mean: on the seafloor where we once traced the same thickening forest
Opaque flailing kelp sends us in opposite directions
Onward to lesser poisons—tawny and syrupy sweet

How you'll miss my belly magic, my black approach, dragging you,
sighing, and feeding, in jawbone altar, through the mud...

Take this quicklime

Tempests

When our climates met, our perceptible limits
dissolved

Our hooves split
Our multitudes, long asleep, came to
Our private meanness, our amphibian spirits

Each and every gender of us lit up
Dazzling bands in a rainbow
in a sky opposite the black sun

The Swim

Not here. The cliffs are terrifying.

There, thinking about the people she will never be
on a boat with, she jumps off your moving boat.
The flat bottoms of clouds edge her quest in her head — groves
and a remote bus station. Every wave mutes at her gaze.

She sets red poppies over her eyes and disappears into private waters,
ignoring all your warnings. She un-images the sea.

Islands, I don't get them.

A serpent effect and fallen turquoise trees near the top of the water.
She is once again a swimmer, brushing up against debris.
Floating, she studies the flight of the magpie.

It is fluid and unreal, like a film, dream, or self.

Coming to in oasis. On the water spreads a darker shade of blue
as the clouds roll over and mirror the power of the laying on of hands.
She pauses and thinks hard before touching the shore.

Weathervanes

We are urgent women in October
Feverishly swelling, divining the fields
and eating with our fingers into the night, on long wooden tables
Passing sticky knives and gourds re-bitten

We are tired women in November
Extinguishing tapered black candles in rows
The ritual made sloppy by our slightly embalmed gestures
Consequential enough to push more than one of us
to just give up

Fluid placid in the red stop-baths of the darkroom
We: are blood women in December lens flares
In December and indefinitely so
Stains drop from us for the others to read later and leave scents
that quicken the pace of the hounds

Can't get out of bed for January
No fingers peeling skin from pomegranates, no contact
January is a lack, though she is warm here and never would
want to abandon us

Here anyway
We're going to leave here anyway
And distant weather we can't predict, though we'll be glad to hear
you're doing just fine

Choreography

From every direction
into the duel

All I have to work with:
risk, waves, your voice

Racing between neon and clovers
I make a bleeding wind

Cross an amethyst stage
Enter windowed rooms

Humiliation is fine
if you don't mind a switch

You don't blush, draw an X
in the northernmost doorway

A controlled site, tense with
emerald coils

We deny morning, we bow out
through thrown gladiola and vapor

Gravina

On the edge of a steep ravine
You who give me laughter, verdant solace, and my favorite joy
Carve our city out of limestone

A labyrinth above buried relics, the silver lungs of heretics,
hearts, livers, and legs, and the earth remains between us and them
We thank them for their healing, light votives for their grief

My eyes are astral and sickly
Your halo depends on the hour and weather
We both believe the sky's silences, that they are pure, though they reveal hardships
Like the indifferent silence of Black Madonnas
You are beautiful like them, flesh and blood like me

Tracing circles, with a sickle, in the mud
Pacing the fountain until and through storms
Reciting vows from which heavy, ripe fruits are born
This brings seasons

We scatter our lamentations on the surface of all waters
Caught, by statues of girls, holding bowls, that never stop dripping
The sound of dripping is release
It slips, autumnally, between our ears

White are the bad omens in our dreams
Your last chance at happiness? Walks away from you in dream-snow,
through thickets of drooped wings

Our revivals are sculpted, each a portal, opulent
Construction takes years
Echoes and offerings transport through aisles invisibly
while our backs arch to vault, hit every flourished point in the windows

We can't see the sea from here but we trust that when the sun hits the water,
good health shimmers in the green ray, in a lizard's tail growing back,
in two grey doves mating drastically, above our heads

Gravina's Coda

People will study and judge our city, and think, dramatics!
And I won't leave evidence to tell them that every day there with you was a good thing
Nightly we lifted our hands to the sky and took pictures
and hid them with our children and with our mineraled dead

Water-Fearing

The year began ominously, with a solar eclipse.
Then the freeze was over, but the trees did not turn green
and a vital part of the passing year was gone.

Its leaving resigned the heart.

A passive awareness of the hidden springs of our actions—
Water so starless and sulphurous, we use it to write
of patience, and silence, and our attitudes toward fate.

After the Flood

You stood stunned and alone on the dock
while the boat's red light projected your losses onto your face.
Made them obvious, cardinal, alive...
And you didn't know quite what to do or say to feel less defeated
and what you couldn't tell then was this:
You would remain defeated

Then the fog ate you
A sepulchral monument for The Lovers to pass through
Clutching their baskets of stone fruit
Their hearts were neither given
nor lost in that moment.
What a mild persecution, you thought, the withholding-of offerings
the refusal to exchange bitters and wildness,
and that is the wrong knife, you thought, for those fat plums!

Of course all was bent in that light:
Carmine, unkind, illusory.
You would have crawled into an underbelly and slept through seasons
had there not been so much work to do,
had you not had to give yourself a good talking to, a long winter's worth.
*Let there be nothing inside your head, except visions of real women
taking pleasure in real redemption!*

But what about that wrong knife in that fat plum?
And just who was bleeding out?

Transformation Myth

Begin in rapture, spine-flowered
and humbled in the sudden reveal
Begin having just drunk

Take or leave now, the discords
What do I care that I'm finally comfortable
with difference

Lynx

A primeval animal
I could reveal, but not say, anything
I could leave everywhere Everywhere, men are violent

I could leave, intuiting the warnings planted in backwaters and open gates
Swamp iris and water cypress Saying, "don't panic" Saying, "run"

To the season of pomegranates and inverted torches
Wading through the mess I've made, to a visionary
who will risk walking rivers with me

Raccoon

All sorts of exorcisms in June
Heels planted, arms half-bent It was a classic hysterical arch

 Anima
 she makes her way out of him
severs her connection with psychic distress

She's nocturnal still and "Who are these strangers?"
Understandably, a quickening suspense and emotional need

Without the she in him, he is a site for loss, bedridden
 His organs albicant

Primavera

An ensemble cast turned inward, we are the green grove, incommunicable.
We fall from our own arms again. Empresses reversed, we're not coming out,
though you could've made us—you, with your arrows darkly.

Such fertile land is elegy and distillation bouquets, merely historic, refract
through a pan of rose water and blood power. *This is about our captivity!*
Big, crystal mosquitoes. Slap a little wax on the wildflowers after a night raid.

Citrus dapples the bloodline. Nothing rots but healing is doubtful.
Can we just be leaves? in dark red fur almost weather-lore.
Winter's exit is audible in the melt and we're nowhere interested.

Tarantati

Hardly behaving like one who's received divine poise
I drag myself around with kind, vile people
We dance the dance of the spider and permeate the sound wave
throwing bright colors, within the limits marked by ritual

And until Here, I'd never walked a city with so many altars
Here I finally learn, when not to react
That my shameless preference for the hottest months
is clinical

I linger for hours near the tambourine and sing
my mistakes on the stoop
Absorb oceanic realities into my whole being
the moment my face breaks into abandon

Saturnalia

Sun strips the theater, looping the Temple of Saturn
Perfumes, rainbowed parrots, a masked procession passes over

and never really returns to its face. Personae: Dead Gladiator,
Serious Sea-Goat, Pig as Earth Deity

Touch of a winter eclipse, emotive inside the moon
A sign of Utopian dangers not far off

Reverse the invisibles that motivate, wild role-playing
and license to game with the master

This is all a bit much, and sure you feast but confuse realities
Whenever you walk my land

The Four Turns¹

Unpoisoned, conjure a guilty presence

Chasten it, give it consciousness, choice
Fill it with sisters, lovers, chemistry
and expansive, tactile miseries

Destabilize every escape

*

Goat, re-bitten, say “resignation”
A primal separation and a warm return

*A forgetful soul wanders into another body
and finds itself in-between other bodies. Lives.*

*

The cure repeats itself in the olive tree
Calendrical remembrance of transmigration
Discover yourself for the third time

*

End in the absence of oxygen
End simply buried, a wooden body
in sulphurous black tent

Turn vaporous and dissolve thought
You are finally charcoal
Warm and feed someone

¹ After Pythagoras's theory of four-fold transmigration, and Michelangelo Frammartino's docu-essay *Le Quattro Volte* — by which the soul passes from human to animal to vegetable to mineral.

Subterranean Loop

I wake up in a cave, all vertigo in the allegory
Banished by a tyrant, I now remember being born
a piece of luscious wildness not wrung out

Gypsum crystal stretch curves along my eyes, inner and outer
A kind of pelt I wrap around myself, an interference
between my body and negative space

What lives here might as well live on the moon
Never needing medicine, where clear still pools do exist
in sockets sculpted clean by acid

Subterranean Loop

An almost forest in a field of ferns with one deep cut
Flora on accident, attempting fruit, but the snakes
eat all (I want to be similar in every way)

In mammoth vase, black and ignorant of flowers
Much like corpses and virgins are ignorant of flowers
Occupying royal positions on the spectrum

I wrap myself into the ferns as I ascend
Fashion my wreath, a laurel woman wouldn't
french kiss limestone with such sacrificial rites

Margery

I am violence in a low pony tail,
malachite husks in my lap
Possessed

and dreamy
like a cloud over the counter

Like a snake in my bathtub
It's casual

On the edge of the garden, really on
Episodic lawns connect to the same wire

I walk the neighborhoods and touch
other people's succulents

Write your name on my clothes
which you allow and I still cry
in public, a saint, just scarier

Parties

Everyone knows when the party's over.
Here you are.

A gaslit room.

Your cards all red and spectacle.
Your rituals flat.

How confused are you.
I'm looking directly at you.
 Tidal — I refuse to speak.

Words don't mean anything anymore.
World's posturing with I don't know how many nukes.

Masculine I'm perfect.
My vote is perfect and I know we have lost.

In the country whose violences demand
constant sun, encounter, and fluency.

What is decay then, if to flourish or die
is not quite a choice.

The Tower

You—off in your distance
Cheapen the snow, the wait—you endanger
water, you're—any old coward, alone in your tower
where you've wasted your magic

I—off in your distance
Feel someone dragging you, someone nuclear
I'm with the water, blind as usual and offering
nothing heroic—my body

Things—aren't looking good

Voices

I don't remember exactly when you started burning things down
but every fire is incredible, clean, a real desperado. Is this document a weapon?
Droning the edges of a desert

I'll look our mysteries right in the eye
Are we okay? Did I do something to upset you? *Why are we like this—*
We've forgotten that other people's lives are...really none of our business

Ego tantrums, is stupid, we're done for in towers, making irrevocable
choices, *the interminable inventory of abominations*
We must not touch anything

I'm drawn to voices that name—you, your motives, your stigmas
I want you ugly or confused or ecstatic, your summits, *Why are you like this*
I see you

Somewhere, a painter, somewhere, locusts swarm the garden, somewhere
everyone on earth asleep at the same time

I'm actually in bed on the bank of the river, under that sky
where I am afraid of no dark, where the night looks back at me,
Next to you, crying over the stars, and *you*, knowing them personally

Then I'm inhaling in the bar, my friends so gorgeous when they walk in the door
Gorgeous on every bathroom floor and on every street, in the bar
we come out from our wells—our facts make all the men wonder *Why am I like this*
as they revert back to behaving like the state

Earth is a Blue Orange

An empire's landscape sure enough polluted
in yellow and green blockades, my bad mood floods
the ground cinematically, stylized vines and vodka, snowed in

I think I'd like a winter beach
I'd like to witness the end of histories, up against their beginnings
Visions, energies, and bodies outlined in cold sand, smokeless
I'd like to understand then drown vividly the abuses we've allowed
against the land and each other

My blood is drawn here from a distant sleep where I am always on the edge of earth
And you, severe Pietà, remind me that people are the best part
You spill unclosed trances while the sun rises in a block of ice
Hellish, citrine, and generous for no one

Aubade

Opalescent crucible
Pearly lights clot every morning goodbye

Ecotone

How will we ever meet?

You and I and our almost-fatal-alliance
We all crave touch
The place where our ecologies are in tension
You-eucalyptus-forest, in uncontrollable nearness, to blind-clearing-me

Listen to me
We'll find each other soon, swoon
then dredge the nearby green lake
and exchange nutrients in the controlled burn
Sound such desperate, bending explosions
and grin

Seeds born to the ash bed stay, honeyed by the pine sun
Want to go wherever we go, we know that, but can't
Not while world is ash and worms writhe inside the clock
The seeds, in the meantime, imitate our deaths when they want us
Each day they pretend wrap us in grave-clothes and pretend bury us
All before the unrelieved creamy line of dawn rolls up
and irons the night away

Our future unchurched, adapts death, stirs.
Everything passes.

A Map for Leaving Great Lakes

Lines we see in Michigan
Lines etch illness in the face
Lines molt voltas | ready know

the touch | it tends the vein
Line poses dénouement
Line a horizon days away
Then days away
Lines design trees simply

Pulled ecology into vehicle
Blue guessed calm
Sun's ray laced you pretend

Line | so long
come on | debut the V

Part dune—more mint
I'll say *fault* plus *limits*

Dangerous Particulars

Off-roading on my knees
Welcome to the Land of Enchantment
I gather spoonfuls of the desert in my mouth
Metallic, geologic, and shrill
I wait competitively—and bacteria
turns the brine pool red

It's bad luck to compare Yucca rosettes
These are the opposite of water, but I've seen them
falling from the sky on Easter with
lightning storms that freeze my anxiety

BOLT X—FLASH FLOOD
BOLT Y—MONEY HEMORRHAGE
BOLT Z—CARDIAC ARREST

Give me a balm and signal coyotes to eat my leek-heart
Hunters in a landscape confectioned
Blood spills, performative
I'm a bad dancer in the middle

Nearly Lush Americana

Animal fat effluvia in Yellowhorse Trading Post
Glamorous mammals charging at tourists
We only want beasts if they're unreal beasts

You sleep now
Cougar-lover, Snake-lover, Pudding-please-lover
You sleep hours, distance, and sky

Little flick of my wrist and we're both roadkill
My meat tastes terrified
yours sweet

One of those accidents that scatters free watermelon all over the highway
Pink pulp: butchered, jeweled, readymade
Slow motion green tragedy

Reaching full-length along the burnout, I'm trying to pull us back from the dead
but first I throw up, like tourists do

Wild parrots lift off in an even green spray
Real green frequencies waving to a dulled pain
We wake up in the aqueduct

Mojave the Living

I spent the winter and spring of 2016 talking to the desert and interpreting its many wild omens and memento mori.

A bison jawbone, scorpion, a dust devil, a team of wild horses...

And I saw, while the silence of those who really had died was invading me as ivy invades the mouths of the stone lions...How luxurious this silence is. It's built up of centuries.

Trips were taken in January, March, and May to the following places: Caliente, NV; Cathedral Gorge State Park; Pahrangat National Wildlife Refuge; Golden Canyon, Badwater, and Artist's Palette all located in the Furnace Creek area of Death Valley National Park; Longstreet Inn Casino and RV Park; Dennis Hof's Alien Cathouse Brothel; Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge (where one day I hope to be married); Amargosa Opera House and Hotel; and China Ranch Date Farm.

It's a silence of a roach that's looking. The world looks at itself in me. Everything looks at everything, everything lives in the other; in the desert things know things.

Two natural phenomena stirred us out of our seats from under the Amargosa Hotel colonnade, and into the desert night: a scorpion charging at us with raised tail and the salty moon rising. We lifted our hands to the Milky Way.

None of the news you hear about me or this desert is true. Nothing true is ever said of us.

*Things know things so much that that's...that's what I'll call forgiveness, if I want to save myself in the human world. It's forgiveness itself. Forgiveness is an attribute of living matter. -Clarice Lispector, *The Passion According to G.H.**

Tropic of Cancer

In the morning, the kitchen was smoking
 A table of waste and mystery
The toaster and the coffee pot both on fire, water boiling over
You'd left the room lit, gone out for good

Our misadventure of wild instincts, set off by wilder traps straddling
an ecotone, was foolish under a citrus sun You say the sun is a crown
 To desire, without wanting, is the crown.

Really I'd rather do nothing
 Watch limes and irises fall through me
 (I have nothing left was a lie)
 No one will see me out anymore

Quiet in the dry season, beyond fields of wildfires
 Dyed, blushing, and trying not to eat themselves

Coastline

I search for you on every island
4,000 islands off Maine's beaten coast

In the land unbeing, in lozenges
In lobster boats and cranberry bogs

In cedar trees inverted over statues and ice
Years of dark winter pass

I know how to catch a devil
and a sea-creature with a huge heart

but you are a nightly near-miss
Ever-shifting, your lostness is junipered

Is salt and sky

Listen

Curtains drawn aside, move further back
to the original wound

Golden and aging in pealing bells
and carnal light

Pitiless
She files silence's nerve

You can't go on living like this
Crazy liberty, as you say

When she finally does come at you talking
She gives you volcanos—brand new islands

Ruby-Throated

One hundred species of hummingbird
granted wherever you want

Floating in the middle of apology
Swarming a healer's needles
Coloring your happy returns

All hunger and light

And biddable, generous ecstasies
Where everything slurries into everything else
Only tender sky and depths
rotating in the air, shimmering

Manchineel

A plant that grows alongside
the sea-olive on Martinique's beaches.

When touched, the fruit of the manchineel
inflicts painful burns that the sea-olive leaf
can heal.

I guess it's wonder at the cure
being so near to the disease, right next to it.
But how do you know?

How do you know what you need, where to find it?
How to get there? By sea, by the violent,
archivist sea, and so much touching.

Natures Mortes

Dramatic and clearly, the alley lights up when you walk it
I too detected you moving towards me
Irrevocably, in decisions and mutable steps

In audio delays, in mouths just ajar from speech, speech not mattering then
or now but now the silent gap is mutual

We'd rather listen to the honeydew melons
revealing their ripeness through the sounding of their interiors

Discords of all the fruit ripening pours into us
from every direction at once, viscid juices siren and clash
Still we isolate the melon stream

A haunt: *it's perfect but already rotting*
until at last it's overripe

The dumpster is full of melons, this we detect
from the dimension of my back thudding against
the green metal, more like a tender rattle
not needing a warning

Aromatherapy

"A memory fell through him as clear as heat falls on herbs." Anne Carson

Origins: we begin in cramps, in mist on an evening-beach.
We begin a *simple* distance apart.
I call you—You found a starfish! Okay, I'm coming.
You meet me on the mossy rocks.
Anemones crown our reflections and we are glassy, featureless,
mostly camphored depths.

We reach for the same images: genderless chickens,
iridescence, clovers and clam-shells, a jaguar scarf.

Back in the canyon, there is a large, brass ring hung
by a leather strap, in the middle of our room. The floors are muddy.
There is wild sage and fog in our bed, and, at last—
numbing, answerable rest.

Dry Heat

April, already so hot Buy berries and frozen
berries Make the room dark Buy plants and let them die
on the surfaces in your apartment Find any pool

 and throw the dead plants on top Take their picture from a ladder
Grow old and continue to allow many things that don't bleed
to die in your apartment.

Thistled rocks will pop and sizzle in their cage
There's exhaustion in the wooden room
 And this heat is earth this hunt is long

Tortoises and snakes fight to death, their abandoned bodies
are lessons in combat—fact—instincts linger, breath becomes air
Thousands of golden tassels stirring smoke of a creosote bush

Valleyed delirium and drain of my best energies
My head has multiplied, gone underground, it turns
the Joshua Tree fields waving us toward paradise

Wet Heat

We wind down
balmy noir roads
Pretend there's no danger
A luxury, a trickery
Reach sea-level and dissolve
the violet surf

Heat is sky, is foam
and topaz forming clouds
on your shoulders
where I rest my head *Just lookin' at ya*
Where your perfume, touchable
in the wet air, is like kissing
in the orchid room of a conservatory

Swallowing this air
We'll just keep getting fatter
More exaggerated and voluminous,
Voluptuaries, demanding
all the riches we please

Gold

Former life objects: shoes, skin, an absence on the ring finger
A crystal sphere filled with smoke, was seductive, revealed nothing
Somewhere a tyrant, always a tyrant, and you called it before anyone

All crucibles of renewal

Good thing you're finally comfortable with renunciation and there you alchemize
every absence—saffron and suns rising through redthickets, still—you're not yet someone
I am able to let go of

Table of the Sun

On a train, in rear-facing seat
I study the light I leave, red a siren in the fog
A siren bends as it passes

A clear sun swallowing my feet, my thighs, my waist
It comes for my face
I say, *sun*, leave me my dignity, everyone deserves their dignity

Light chimes the sea with copper—coloring, quartering, mining
my thoughts through frozen pastorals, bright cities, weak breakthroughs
I welcome each gesture, full-out

I have flooded my voice, the fool's, *a great yes* glowing in the tropics of our fever
Sounding like something simple

Like going, unbothered, in flight
My migration in a downpour lands as one drenched anthem

Reliquary

Junipered
Thistled
Spine-flowered
Opalescent
Balmy
Balsam
Menthol
Numbed
Voluptuary
Disrobe
Saffron
Icicles
Butchery
Slip
Crucible
Theater
Salt
Topaz
Currents
Smoke
Scrutiny
Grotesque
Shrieks
Rapture
Climactic
Redthickets
Lore

Bibliography

Carson, Anne. *Glass, Irony & God*. New Directions Books, 1995.

Cixous, Hélène. *Stigmata: Escaping Texts*. Routledge Press, 1998.

De Martino, Ernesto. *The Land of Remorse: A Study of Southern Italian Tarantism*.

Translated by Dorothy Zinn, Free Association Books, 2005.

Glissant, Édouard. *Poetics of Relation*. Translated by Betsy Wing, University of Michigan Press, 1997

Le Quattro Volte. Dir. Michelangelo Frammartino. Kino International, 2010. Film.

Lispector, Clarice. *The Passion According to G.H.* Translated by Idra Novey, New Directions Books, 2012.

Luchte, James. *Pythagoras and the Doctrine of Transmigration: Wandering Souls*. Continuum Books, 2009.

Pessoa, Fernando. *The Book of Disquiet*. Translated by Richard Zenith, Penguin Books, 2003.

Curriculum Vitae

CHRISTINE BETTIS

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bettischristine@gmail.com

EDUCATION

University of Nevada – Las Vegas
August 2014 – April 2017
M.F.A. in Creative Writing-Poetry

Wayne State University, Detroit, MI
April 2011 – April 2014
B.A. Summa Cum Laude in Honors English
Area of Concentration: Creative Writing

Naropa University, Boulder, CO
August 2009 – April 2010
Areas of Concentration: Writing and Literature; Performance Art

AWARDS

Finalist, Tennessee Williams/New Orleans Literary Festival Poetry Contest, 2017
Sundress Academy Best of the Net Nominee, 2016
Black Mountain Institute International Award, 2016
First Place for “Ecotone”, Helen Stewart Poetry Award, *Helen: A Literary Magazine*, 2016
Pushcart Prize Nominee, 2016
Semi-finalist for the 2014 Atlantis Award given by *The Poet’s Billow*
First Place for *Sexy Proletariat*, Tompkins Poetry Contest, 2014
First Place for *The Root Word of Brick*, Tompkins Poetry Contest, 2013
Tudor Scholarship in Creative Writing, 2013
Loughead-Eldredge Creative Writing Scholarship, 2013
Joseph J. and Mary E. Yelda Merit Scholarship, 2012/2013

WORK EXPERIENCE

University of Nevada – Las Vegas
Assistant to the Creative Writing Coordinator
January 2016 – Present

University of Nevada – Las Vegas
Graduate Teaching Assistant
August 2014 – Present

Writing Center at University of Nevada – Las Vegas
Consultant
August 2014 – December 2014

Wayne Literary Review
Poetry Editor
July 2013 – April 2014

Write-A-House Nonprofit
Intern
July 2012 – February 2013

Pork & Mead Magazine
Staff Writer
October 2010 – July 2012

AmeriCorps
Volunteer in Service to America
January 2008 – January 2009

CREATIVE WORK

Table of the Sun, 2017
MFA Creative Thesis
Intimate interrogations of ecology, varied political and romantic disasters, and psychic states.

The Seven Stone Path, 2017
Translation
A translation of Mimmo Sammartino's text *Vito ballava con le streghe* (Vito Danced with the Witches) and its accompanying sculpture/soundscape path connecting the two mountain villages of Castelmezzano and Pietrapertosa, in the Basilicata region of Southern Italy. The path is an ancient peasant/sheep track that has since been turned into a literary walk with talking stones that recite passages from Sammartino's story. Each of the seven stones is a major theme pulled from *Vito ballava con le streghe*: destiny, incantations, sorcery, witches, flying, dancing, and delirium. *Vito* acts as a collective folk history of Castelmezzano, largely passed down to Sammartino by his grandmother.

Ankle Bone, 2014
Manuscript
A 30 page trans-creation of Albertine Sarrazin's prison lit novel *Astragal* in which I translate between genres from prose to poetry.

Linear Dimensions, 2013
Manuscript
A 25 page poetic investigation of the line in every sense of the word.

The Root Word of Brick, 2012

Manuscript

A poetic project that utilized several literary and linguistic concepts, including heteroglossia, langue/parole, defamiliarization, to tell the story of a suburban house.

Experimental in form.

The Doorknob Sheens, 2011

Manuscript

A body of work comprised of 5 short stories, 5 dramas, and 5 poems.

Call Me, 2011

Uncreative Writing Project

A transcript of the sexually explicit classifieds section of *Real Detroit Weekly*.

CONFERENCES, PRESENTATIONS, AND READINGS

Neon Lit Reading Series, October 2016, Las Vegas, NV

Poetry Reading

"Body Ajar"

Rushton Undergraduate Conference, February 2014, Detroit

Presentation of creative text that works in dialogue with Malcolm De Chazal's *Sens-Plastique*, composed of body-centric aphorisms about mannequins, avatars, strippers, and beyond.

@Noon Reading Series, November 2013, Detroit, MI

Public reading of my portfolio alongside Pushcart Prize finalist Francine J. Harris.

PUBLICATIONS

"Lynx", "Tarantati", "Dry Heat"

Poems forthcoming in *Interim*, Fall 2017

"After the Flood"

Poem forthcoming in *NILVX: A Book of Magic*, Spring 2017

"Tempests"

Poem published in *Corbel Stone Press*, February 2017.

"Earth is a Blue Orange"

Poem published in *Public Pool*, January 2017.

“Subterranean Loops”

Series of poems published in *Action Yes*, September 2016.

“Decorative Cult”

Poem published in *Prelude*, May 2016.

“Ecotone”

Poem published in *Helen*, April 2016.

Burnout Paradise

Poetry chapbook published by Horse Less Press, January 2016.

“Lots”

Poem published in *Storm Cellar*, September 2015.

“Slippage Prisms”

Digital Art published in *Two Serious Ladies*, April 2015.

“Two Diptychs”

Digital art published in *Queen Mob’s Teahouse*, January 2015.

“Pedestrian”

Poem published in *Spread ‘Em*, October 2013.

“Cross Dress”

Poem published in *Spread ‘Em*, October 2013.

“Wine Glass to the Hand Mirror”

Poem published in the *Wayne Literary Review*, April 2013.

LANGUAGES

English – native language

Spanish – speak, read, and write with basic competence

Italian – novice

MEMBERSHIPS

Phi Beta Kappa

Neon Lit – Vice President and Financial Administrator (2015-2017)

Emerging Writers Series – Committee Chair (2015-2017)

Feminist Collective of Detroit – Community Liaison (2012-2014)

Wayne Writer’s Forum (2012-2014)

Wayne State University Political Science Student Organization (2013)