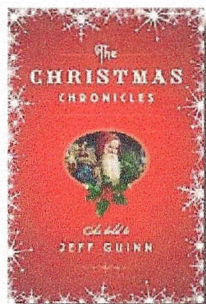


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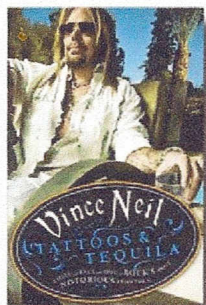
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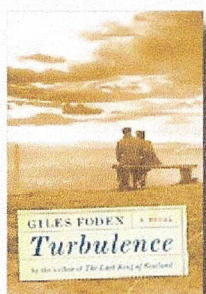
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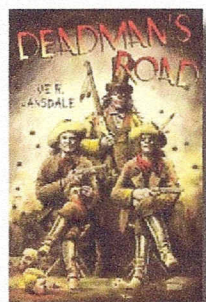
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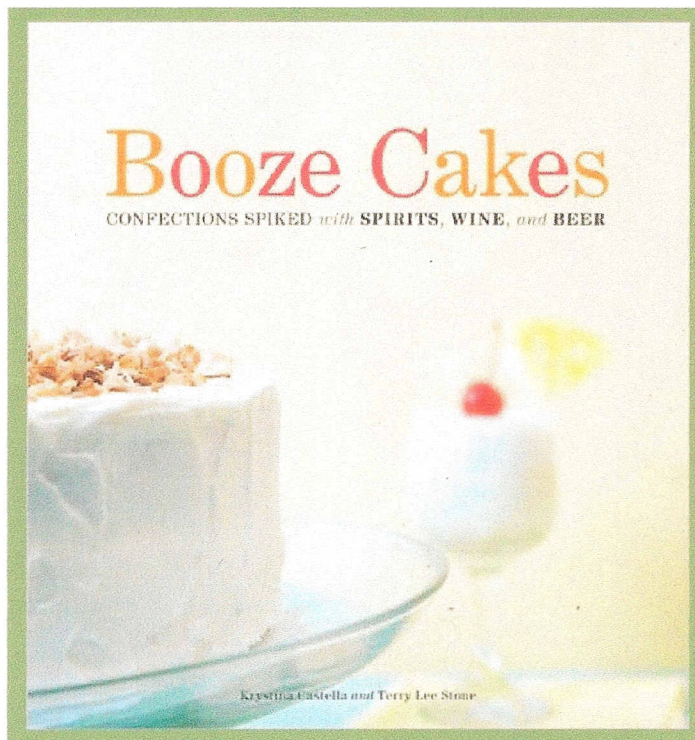
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Booze Cakes: Confections Spiked With Spirits, Wine, and Beer

By Krystina Castella and Terry Lee Stone
Quirk Books, \$16.95, 144 pages

Love decadent desserts? *Booze Cakes: Confections Spiked with Spirits, Wine, and Beer* dishes up a slice of alcohol-laced cakes guaranteed to tempt even the strictest teetotaler. Authors Krystina Castella and Terry Lee Stone promise that these appealing desserts are simple: just mix, bake, and buzz.

"Baking is magic. Baking with booze is even more magic."

The cookbook's introduction simplifies the baking process, breaks down the differences between beer, liquor, wine, and li-

queur, and explains how baking time affects alcohol content. Both authors stress baking should be a fun, relaxed activity, that instead of an experiment of perfection.

More than 108 booze cake recipes and 32 cake shot recipes are included. Recipes include variations, tips, cocktail recipes and a booze meter that measures a cake's alcohol content and labels it as lightweight, feeling it, or totally tipsy. These tipsy confections are divided into four types of cakes. Classic

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Poetry & Short Stories

Mystery Montage: A Collection of Short Story Mysteries

By Patricia Morin
Top, \$14.95, 217 pages

Crafting a good short story is a challenge. The author has less time – and space – to build a plot and develop characters. When done poorly, you are left feeling like you've nibbled on a snack, hungry for something more substantial. Patricia Morin's collection of short-story mysteries, *Mystery Montage*, feels more like a full-course meal.

Morin's stories are diverse and exotic, spanning the globe from Atlantic City and San Francisco to Honolulu and, even, a small village in Africa. It's these far-flung settings that keep things interesting and vibrant; each story immerses the reader in a new world. Morin's voice changes with each locale; she's got an uncanny knack for creating wildly differing characters and, yet, infusing them all with enough personality to bring them to life and make them believable. Whether she's writing about an elderly woman who discovers a ring in the sand beneath a boardwalk, a young rapper who will stop at nothing to win a recording contract, or a chocolate-loving Hawaiian widow saddled with her husband's secret gambling debts, her characters jump off the page. They feel real and are surprisingly fully-developed. If there's one criticism, it's that they occasionally shy away from common sense.

One of the high points of *Mystery Montage* is the fact that each story feels completely unique; no two are alike, either structurally or in tone, giving the collection a fresh feel. It reads like an anthology filled with works from a variety of authors – a difficult feat for one person to pull off. Morin takes the basic mystery genre and hacks it up into various sub-genres, from the noirish feel of Rap Sheet to the hilariously screwball Who Killed Horatio T. Adams? Stories range in length from 51 pages to three (for Homeless, an impressive exercise in brevity).

Never too complex, but always entertaining, *Mystery Montage* delivers good storytelling in easily digestible chapters. Let's hope Morin is hard at work on MM2.

Sponsored Review

Marbles of Pearl: Tale of the Satyr

By Bruce Wayne
Xlibris, \$19.99, 114 pages

From the lofty view of a gawking gargoyle to a rocky ride in choppy waters led by a famous bow, Bruce Wayne guides his readers on a voyage through a legendary poetic expedition. *Marbles of Pearl* is a tribute to mythological characters, lively humans and

the age old love of language, Old English, in particular.

One of the most interesting, and entertaining, exercises are Wayne's crafty blends of humor illustrated by his Minor and Major Dedications at the beginning of each poem. Each poem he has devoted to major players in both the real world and the mythological realms: "Major Dedication to John Cheever" "Minor Dedication to Orpheus." Some of them are rather intriguing, Humphrey Bogart, Johnny Depp, Napoleon Bonaparte. Instead of having to slow my reading down to research the names of the dedicated, I would have preferred a brief explanation to guide the reader into the cadence. Written in the form of a play, effectively, with a Prologue, Six Acts, an Epilogue and a Curtain Call, the work has a balanced, rhythmic flow and a unique form (not often utilized in today's modern poetry). Wayne's work models his inspiration, ancient Greek epic poetry, through his use of symbolism, metaphor and assonance, "On high one Pilot Idol Heeds his captive ring, She sends a ship with bosom crew As her offering In desperate oath She lay Her trust Her trust in mortal king On the wings of Avarice Treasure to redeem The king and crew do sail on through War both fair and keen While praying to Her ivory bust Her bust above the beam"

This collection of verse is an endeavor indeed. At times, I felt overwhelmed by the subject matter and history, almost as if there was a secret code that I was not privy to. I would recommend this to those brave and adventurous code breakers.

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Pima Road Notebook

By Keith Ekiss
New Issues Poetry & Prose, \$15.00, 75 pages

After reading Keith Ekiss' debut poetry collection, *Pima Road Notebook*, you will know his world intimately. It is a world of fluid boundaries, where ancient and new, inside and outside, city and suburb and desert all intersect, commingle. It is a dangerous, stark, yet gorgeous world evoked by Ekiss' barbed and beautiful voice.

In writing a new west, Ekiss takes necessary time to negate clichéd images of cowboys and Indians in poems such as "Comic Book West," "If Avedon Photographed

My Father," and "Pima Houses (c.1850)." But thankfully, he doesn't spend too much time on them. Instead, his poems travel down mineshafts, into canyons, up mountain peaks, and through abandoned houses, searching for a true Southwest in the detritus and scrub. What he finds — a rattler, shards of bone, monsoons, a girl stroking the snout of a horse — is all strangely familiar. Like fairytales archetypes, they are buried in us for Ekiss to excavate. Each of his images, whether scorpion or broken home, stretch of freeway or creosote, warns of a danger which seems to live, glistening like an arrowhead, just below the surface of normal life.

Reviewed by Katie Cappello

Crave Radiance

By Elizabeth Alexander
Graywolf Press, \$26.00, 256 pages

In the poem "Passage," Elizabeth Alexander movingly tells the story of a slave who escapes his master by hiding in a coffin; elsewhere she captures the outsider experiences of contemporary blacks, as in "Apollo," when a black family pulls over in New England to watch TV footage of the first moon walk, their blackness strangely unnoticed because the astronauts are "stranger, stranger even than we are." With her expressive feel for the texture and rhythms of its culture, Alexander is a lyric historian of African American life, peopling her poems with artists, athletes, statesmen, heroes and poets of different times and places: photographer James Van Der Zee, painter and collagist Romare Bearden, singer Josephine Baker, boxer Muhammad Ali, Kashmiri poet Agha Shahid Ali, musicians Ornette Coleman and Thelonious Monk. Alexander also draws on her middle class upbringing in Washington, D.C., but there is much here, too, about becoming an adult, a wife, and a mother. Following Robert Frost, poet of John Kennedy's brief presidency, Alexander delivered a poem at Barack Obama's inauguration. Chair of African American Studies at Yale, she has published steadily since *The Venus Hottentot* in 1990. *Crave Radiance* includes poems from each of her five books, plus 15 new poems.

Reviewed by Zara Raab

Night & Day: New and Selected Poems (1975-2010)

By P.J. Laska
Xlibris, \$19.99, 146 pages

"O the fabulous histories of fleeting things remain each once and ever instant effervescent, like the faces you'll remember years hence when the hills are mythic fictions of the night sky—a moon will rise in memory over Morgantown, and you'll be thinkin what if what if what if..." P.J. Laska's collection of poems are a tour de force in the examination of a disappearing homeland, the government's gross and compulsive negligence, and the way back to a place of home through philosophical musings. Laska has portrayed a fertile landscape of a working-class citizenship; coal miners, janitors, salesmen across the rich diversities of the Appalachians. But it could be anywhere, anywhere there is history and the undying thirst to regain its story.

Night & Day is a revolutionary documentary shaped by Laska's skill and free-thinking awareness. He has crafted this collection into three very distinct and thought-provoking sections, each lending a vivid picture created on a palette of carefully blended "anti-lyrics." His style reaches from haiku to epigrammatic dialogue to philosophical conversations to a one-act play. The different forms make for a seamless flow and keep the reader engaged in an almost voyeuristic indulgence. The images are seen, felt, and experienced, "Quick-dipping their heads, they roll silvery drops down their backs then shimmy the dust from their wings." His eye for the senses is clearly evident, a profound craftsmanship on each page.

The main theme points to loss and the restitution of a culture, a reinstatement of what has vanished, what has been taken, or rather, an intense look back at a sober lingering. The government's involvement is one of disdain, but what strikes me is the search for meaning through philosophical traditions, the hope for a return to nature, and what is whole from a place of drought. In many ways, these poems are odes and pieces of the subject's soul. This is a call, an invitation, to query. I accept.

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