# OREGON PORTLAND

# NEW RELEASE THE GOODBYE KIT

# BY DANEEN BERGLAND

Narrative but elliptical, The Goodbye Kit is awash in lyric that thrills as it laments. Themes of transgression and longing infuse these poems about girlhood, marriage, parenthood, aging, and nature. Mapping the charged terrain of human relationship, and marked by a feral sensuality, they explore ecologies of intimacy made tangible through both experience and witness. Their impulse is to capture and project beauty and loss, but also view our mutable and tender flesh through "wolf-colored glasses," revealing us as the beautiful, culpable animals we are.

We are all so impossible: how could we not love / that we can never touch / the giant tube worms inside their sheaths/ gently waving their red plumes in the boiling dark, writes Daneen Bergland, and it's in the momentary slip at "that"...At bedrock is loss, felt most keenly in relation to the natural world where, like the earth itself, we are shown to be vivid, strange, and in peril. Listen:

The bird outside the window / isn't really singing, I can tell how taxing it is, / to carve that sound out of silence/ with his tiny serrated voice.

-MICHELE GLAZER



THE GOODBYE KIT
BY DANEEN BERGLAND
\$18.00, FULL-LENGTH PAPER
ISBN 978-1-950404-15-5
SEPTEMBER 2024

This poetry is memorable, meaningful, new, and beautiful. Bergland writes of perfection and oddity in tumbling images and shockingly fantastical associations.

With wit. With music.

-LAURA KASISCHKE, AUTHOR OF WHERE NOW:
NEW AND SELECTED POEMS, THE
INFINITESIMALS, AND SPACE, IN CHAINS



Daneen Bergland grew up in the Midwest but found her way home to the Pacific Northwest. She's been a recipient of a poetry fellowship from Oregon Literary Arts, and her writing has appeared in several journals and books, including Propeller Magazine, The Cincinnati Review, Tahoma Literary Review, Denver Quarterly, and Alive at the Center: an Anthology of Contemporary Pacific Northwest Poets. She teaches at Portland State University.

## MORE ABOUT DANEEN

Daneen Bergland wrote her own obituary when she was in the fourth grade. It was sort of a joke -- an early artifact of a nascent morbid humor, but also contained -- citing her death at age 99 after a long, colorful life as a successful writer -- the kernel of an aspiration. She grew up in the Midwest in a small island of woods surrounded by corn fields, where loneliness, books, and boredom led to an active imagination. The daughter of two teachers -- music and biology, respectively - she developed an early penchant for the music of words, and a curiosity about the drama and beauty of the natural world, writing poems about the trees and river of her childhood home.

As a college student, she was introduced to the work of 20th century American poets who would deeply inspire her writing: Theodore Roethke, Robert Bly, Carolyn Kizer, Anne Sexton, Lucille Clifton, Mary Oliver. Later, the work of Louise Gluck, Lucie Brock-Broido, Mary Ruefle, Laura Kasischke, Michele Glazer, and others, became important influences as she crafted her own poetic voice. She earned her bachelor's degree in Women's Studies and Creative Writing at Minnesota State University at Mankato. After a decadelong career working with adult victims of abuse, she returned to school in the Master's in Writing Program at Portland State University to fulfill her original plan of becoming a writer.

A recipient of an Oregon Literary Arts fellowship, her writing has appeared in several journals including Propeller Magazine, The Cincinnati Review, Tahoma Literary Review, Denver Quarterly, and Alive at the Center: an Anthology of Contemporary Pacific Northwest Poets. She teaches in the general education program at PSU, where her scholarly work focuses on media literacy, civic engagement, and helping students tap into their own creativity, curiosity, and poetic sense of language and witness.

### Q AND A

#### What are some of the themes of your poetry?

I'm really interested in the relationship of humans to plants and animals, how stories shape our sense of the world and our place in it, and the impact of humans on the planet and the impending sense of doom and hope that knowledge engenders, how we live and act with that knowledge.

A recurring theme emerges around the question: what makes something natural? We refer to substances that are synthetic, meaning they were made by humans and wouldn't have existed without us. Poems themselves are made things, synthetic -- an extraction and arrangement of ideas, images, words. And yet humans are natural, and animals create things and have impacts on their environment as well. So some of my poems explore the edges of definitions we use to separate ourselves from nature, or things within nature: natural, wild, tame, feral, native, exotic.

#### What is the significance of the title? What goes into a Goodbye Kit?

The book got its title from one of the poems, which ended up becoming the last poem of the collection. It's sort of a surreal list poem that catalogues what one might take with them at the end of a life, or the end of the world, or at least the end of the world as one knows it. The story from Genesis of the expulsion from the garden of Eden became a kind of palimpsest for a few of the poems in this book, this one included.

This book was written over several years, during which my own identity shifted as I aged: daughter, wife, mother, etc. At the same time, my entire life I've been aware of the impact of human industry and consumption on the environment: habitat loss, animal extinctions, climate change. I'd say that knowledge, along with the way the concept of mortality clarifies as I age, and how the stakes of that really crystalized at those moments of those identity shifts – specifically marriage and motherhood – when the stakes suddenly become so much higher, and the inevitability of loss more real. That, I think forms the bass note of the book.

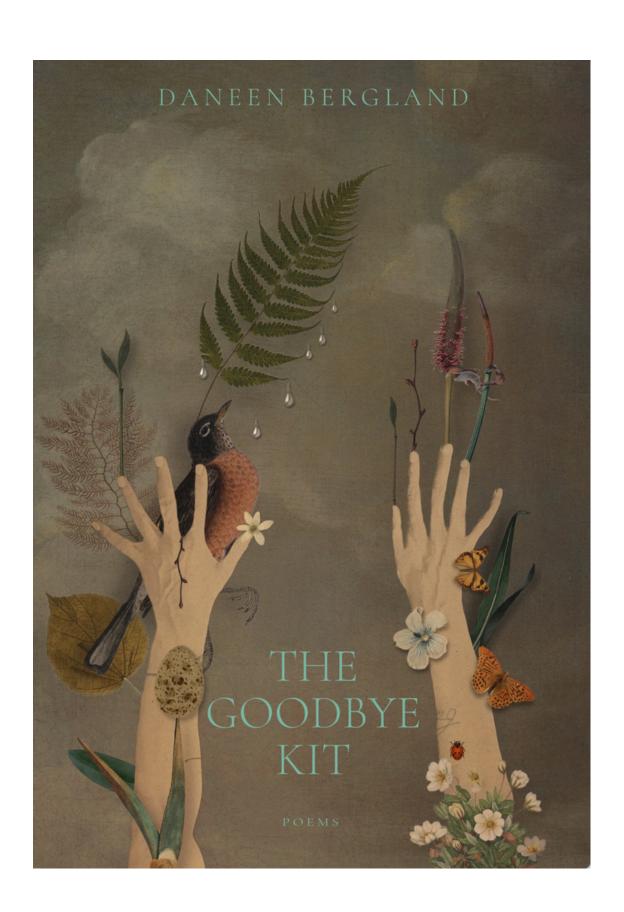
Motherhood in particular created new connective tissue in my sense of a place in the web of life, and a deeper empathy for living creatures. "If you've never been full of eggs, you wouldn't understand."

#### How do the ideas/inspiration come to you? What is your process?

I'm often inspired by things I've read, such as news stories or books of non-fiction. For instance, Michael Pollan's The Botany of Desire gave me a lot to think about in terms of how plants evolved in response to humans (or vice versa).

Some of my poems start with hypothetical questions, like what if instead of male and female binary of gender, we had people and plants as the binary?

The ubiquitous videos I encounter of animals on the internet, and the ones I encounter in real life also inspire the ideas and images in my poems. My process usually starts with jotting down ideas or reactions to stories I've heard or witnessed in my journal. Later, I hunt for any phrases or ideas that feel like seeds and grow a poem from there, listening for and arranging the music of the words as they surface.





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