a kind of happy monster, born in New Jersey but conceived in Cuba and Italy, at once devoutly Catholic and flamingly queer, a Harvard-educated physician who prescribes Nuyorican poetry along with pills, who educates about HIV in Spanish and writes villanelles in English.” The book’s three sections speak to the poet’s “mongrel” vision and treat the reader to his capacious humanity. He writes, often with a stunningly inventive panoply of received forms, about childhood memories; writing poetry; his responses to global atrocities and immigrant experiences; his patients and practice of medicine; and his own familial and romantic relationships. Like his earlier collections, Alternative Medicine prescribes large doses of empathy for much that ails us.

In the caustic “Pharmacopeia for the New Millennium,” “Empathase” is one of a series of mock drugs recommended for the psycho-social ills that plague the oblivious and well-fed. It is “[i]ndicated for the reduction of despair associated with the loss of compassion.” When we are inured to suffering, we, too, become despairing, lost in a solipsistic stupor. Campo forces us to look at inequity and misery head-on and in so doing, to look squarely at ourselves. In the tellingly titled “Iatrogenic,” the doctor gives his complete attention to a patient who self-harms, while “other patients wait.” The poem is an understated elegy for the suffering we feelless humans inflict upon ourselves, all of us responsible, all of us incapable of assuaging or even preventing our collective self-harming. The doctor touches his patient’s “deep red cuts” and knows his patient as himself: “as if I could touch pain itself, as if/ by touching pain I might alleviate/ my own despair.”

Campo’s work provides us with a reminder that poetry is more than palliative; it is a way of touching that existential pain and alleviating the despair that is our burdensome response to the anguish of existence. It is these kinds of poetic reckonings that make Campo a doctor to us all.

Any of these collections would be worthy additions to a medical humanities or themed literature course. Though radically different in voice, style, and theme, each reflects the poet’s belief in the restorative powers of language itself.

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Contributors’ Notes

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Erica Cavanagh is a graduate of the Nonfiction Writing Program at the University of Iowa. She is writing a memoir about being a woman in Benin. Her nonfiction has appeared in The Missouri Review, North American Review, and Gastronomica. She lives in the Shenandoah Valley with her husband and teaches nonfiction writing and food studies at James Madison University.


Ginger Eager teaches remedial reading and writing at Georgia Military College. Her work has appeared in Terrain.org, Blue Collar Review, The Georgia Review, and Fifth Wednesday Journal. She currently lives in Decatur, Georgia with her husband and son, but previously lived in Pattaya, Thailand, the setting for her story in this journal.

Jacob L. Freedman is a psychiatrist practicing outside of Boston. He has written and lectured on a wide variety of topics, worked as a healthcare consultant, and is clearly Grandma’s favorite for lots of good reasons beyond the fact that he made it through Harvard. He is happy to talk with people if they pay his shockingly affordable fees for psychotherapy and/or promise to laugh at his jokes.

Ben Goldfarb is a freelance environmental writer and correspondent at High Country News, for which he reports on wildlife, ecology, and, whenever possible, issues involving fish. His journalism has appeared in The Guardian, OnEarth Magazine, and Earth Island Journal, and his fiction has appeared in the Allegheny Review. Raised in Hastings-on-Hudson, he has since lived in Thailand, Alaska, and Colorado. He is very slowly working on his first novel.

Jessica Greenbaum is the author of The Two Yvonnes, which was chosen by Paul Muldoon for Princeton University’s Series of Contemporary Poets in 2012 and was voted by Library Journal one of the Best Books in Poetry that year. A social worker, she runs poetry groups for older adults, and is interested in working with other non-traditional groups. She is the poetry editor of upstreet and teaches at Barnard College.
Marylen Grigas works at an architectural stained glass studio in Burlington, Vermont and occasionally teaches poetry at a local college. Her poems appear in *Alaska Quarterly Review*, *The Midwest Quarterly*, and *The New Yorker*.

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Greg McBride is the author of *Portbale*, *Liam Rector First Book Prize for Poetry*, and *Back of the Envelope*. His awards include the *Boulevard* Emerging Poet prize and a grant in poetry from the Maryland State Arts Council. His work appears in *Bellevue Literary Review*, *Gettysburg Review*, *River Styx*, *Salmagundi*, and *Southern Poetry Review*. A Vietnam veteran and lawyer, he edits *The Innisfree Poetry Journal*.

Matt W. Miller is the author of the poetry collections *Cameo Diner* and *Club Icarus*, which won the 2012 Vassar Miller Poetry Prize. He is a former Wallace Stegner Fellow in Poetry at Stanford University and has published work in *Slate*, *Harvard Review*, *Memorious*, *Poetry Daily*, *Notre Dame Review*, *Southern Review*, and *The Rumpus*. He teaches and coaches at Phillips Exeter Academy where he also directs the Writers’ Workshop at PEA.

Keya Mitra is an assistant professor of creative writing and literature at Pacific University and completed her MFA and PhD at the University of Houston’s Creative Writing Program. In 2008 Keya spent a year in India on a Fulbright grant in creative writing. Her fiction is forthcoming in *The Kenyon Review*, *The Southwest Review*, *Arts and Letters*, and *Slush Pile*, and has appeared in *Best New American Voices*, *Ontario Review*, *Orchid*, *Evesnt*, *Fourteen Hills*, *Torpedo*, and *Confrontation*.

Matt Morton was a finalist for the 2013 Ruth Lilly Fellowship as well as *Narrative’s* 30 Below Contest. His poems appear in *West Branch*, *Colorado Review*, *Cincinnati Review*, and *32 Poems*. Originally from Rockwall, Texas, he teaches creative writing and literature at Johns Hopkins University.

Joel W. Nelson spent most of his childhood in the Sub-Saharan countries of Burkina Faso and Cote d’Ivoire. He has an MFA in Poetry from Spalding University and lives with his wife and son in Louisville, Kentucky.


JoLee G. Passerini holds an MFA from the University of Alabama. She teaches at Eastern Florida State College, where she also sponsors the student creative writing club, *The Writers’ Haven*. JoLee’s poems have appeared in *Rattle*, *Nimrod*, *Diagram*, and *Spoon River*. Teaching full-time, JoLee let her poetry languish for several years. She thanks her students for encouraging her to “get busy, start writing again, and send some stuff out.”

Linda Pastan’s most recent book, *Traveling Light*, was published in 2011. She was Poet Laureate of Maryland from 1991-1995, and in 2003 she won the Ruth Lilly Poetry Prize. Her fourteenth book of poems will be called *Insomnia*.


Jeanine Pfiiffer is an ethno-ecologist who focuses on bio-cultural diversity. After working in over thirty countries, she settled in Northern California, where she serves as a scientific advisor for local government, tribes, and community-based agencies. She teaches environmental science at San José State University and is the author of *One Sacred Fruit*: *Human and Cultural Ecology of the Mangosteen, Flores Island and Indonesian Community-Based Bio-cultural Diversity*. Her poetry appears frequently on the Mendocino County public radio station.

Doug Ramspeck is the author of four poetry books. His most recent collection, *Original Bodies*, was selected for the Michael Waters Poetry Prize at Southern Indiana Review Press. Two earlier books also received awards: *Mechanical Fireflies* (Barrow Street Press Poetry Prize), and *Black Tupelo Country* (John Giardi Prize). His poems appear in *The Kenyon Review*, *Slats*, *The Southern Review*, and *The Georgia Review*.


Martha Serpas has published two collections of poetry, *Côte Blanche* and *The Dirty Side of the Storm*. Her third, *The Diesel*, will be published by LSU Press in early 2015. Her work has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The Nation*, *Image*, and *Southwest Review*. Active in efforts to restore Louisiana’s wetlands, she co-produced *Veins in the Gulf*, a documentary about coastal erosion. She teaches at the University of Houston and serves as a hospital trauma chaplain.

Hal Sirowitz has had Parkinson’s disease for twenty years. His first poem about Parkinson’s was published in BLR. His latest book of poetry, *Stray Cat Blues*, was awarded the Nebraska Book Prize 2013 Poetry Book Competition.

Andrea Witzke Slot writes poetry, fiction, essays, and academic work, and is particularly interested in how and where these genres intersect. She is the author of the poetry collection *To find a new beauty*, and her work appears in *Southeast Review*, *Poetry East*, *Mezzo Cammin*, *Nomad*, *Tupelo Quarterly*, *Spoon River Poetry Review*, and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

Stephen Truman Sugg is a recovering lobbyist, rural sociologist, educator, and doctoral candidate at the College of William and Mary. His experiences as a Congressional staffer and as an agricultural laborer contributed equally to “Vertical Integration,” his debut fiction publication. He also writes children’s fiction, has published several op-ed pieces, and has a story forthcoming in *Midwestern Gothic*. He lives in Rockville, Maryland, with his wife, toddler, and infant twins.

Dennis James Sweeney has published in *Diagram*, *Indiana Review*, *Mid-American Review*, and *Unstuck*. He has two chapbooks: *What They Took Away* and *THRE-ATY*. He lives in Corvallis, Oregon.

Steven Swiryn is a cardiologist and Adjunct Professor of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science at Northwestern University. Retired from clinical medicine, he continues research and teaching, and occasionally performs in coffeehouses and bars as a singer-songwriter. He is working on a memoir of his time in medicine called *Rhythms and Blues*. “The Unicycle” is his first fiction publication.

Glenn Vanstrum, a physician, surfer, and pianist, has published short fiction in *Bellevue Literary Review*, *LitnIMAGE*, and *THEMA*. His book of nature writing, *The Saltwater Wilderness*, won a San Diego Book Award. Essays have appeared in *Sierra* and the *Los Angeles Times*. He has written six novels and is gestating a seventh.

Rhonda Browning White resides in Port Orange, Florida, with her husband, Randy, and son, Jacob. She has an MFA from Converse College in South Carolina. Her short stories, essays, and poetry have appeared in *Ploughshares* “Writing Lessons”, *Steel Toe Review*, *Gambit*, *Bluestone Review*, *Thrive*, *FW Executive*, in the literary anthologies *Appalachia’s Last Stand*, *Seeking the Swan*, and *Mountain Voices: Illuminating the Character of West Virginia*. She works as an editor, speaker and ghostwriter for Inspiration For Writers, Inc.

Kenny Williams’ poems appear in *Gulf Coast*, *Lake Effect*, *FIELD*, *Storyscape*, *Fence*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Rattle*, *the American Literary Review*, and *Kenyon Review Online*. He lives in Richmond, Virginia, and holds an MFA from the Vermont College of Fine Arts.

Lindsay Wilson, an English professor in Reno, Nevada, edits the literary journal *The Meadow*. His fifth chapbook, *Black-Footed Country*, will be published this year. Other poetry has appeared in *The Portland Review*, *Verse Daily*, *The Minnesota Review*, *Salamander*, and the *South Dakota Review*.


Felicia Zamora is the author of the chapbook *Moby Dick Made Me Do It*. Her writing appears in *elliSIS*...literature and art, *Harpur Palate*, *Puerto del Sol*, *The Laurel Review*, *The Journal*, *The Normal School*, *The Pinch Journal*, and *Writers Residency* magazine. She is an associate poetry editor for the *Colorado Review*, a 2012 Martha’s Vineyard Writers Residency poet, and holds an MFA in Creative Writing from Colorado State University.