



LOST HORSE PRESS

is pleased to announce the publication of

DECOMPOSITION

Fungi-Inspired Poems

edited by

RENÉE ROEHL & KELLY CHADWICK

FROM THE INTRODUCTION

... Poems, like mushrooms, demand our close attention before they can be found or seen at all. As mushrooms are a hybrid kingdom—first thought to be plants, now believed closer to animals, but truly neither, a life form in fact uniquely their own—so it is with poems, which reside hybrid between music and speech, between logic and feeling, between waking thought and the leapings of dream, doing work they alone can. And then, as the largest living creature on earth (described in Laura Kasischke's poem) is a fungal mat whose expressed DNA extends over many square miles in Oregon's eastern forests, so poetry's mostly unseen devices underlie, sustain, and connect over vast distances other dimensions of language, whether lullaby, sermon, or political address at both its best and its worst. As mushrooms hold dangerous powers, so do poems—Plato famously banned poets from his ideal Republic because their words can sway in ways beyond reason's reach. Both mushrooms and poems hold shamanic potential; when taken inside us fully, they have the power to alter consciousness in profoundly unpredictable ways.

Neither porcini nor poems are day to day staples: continuous availability is confined to the more easily grown, more easily storable grains. Yet the intensities of the rare, the seasonal, the brief, the strange, and that which requires both a kneeling intimacy and depth of knowledge to be safely known at all—these are needed as much as oatmeal, rice, or bread. It is that elusive, concentrated presence, the sudden coming and going of life forms mostly hidden, the awareness of mysteries that can only be given, not forced into being, that both the mushrooms and the poems in this volume point toward. Gathered from the root-zones of many different trees, knife-scraped from rock-face, lifted from dung, spore-flung into air, these gathered mushroom poems offer undomestic, distinctive discoveries to all who choose to join the effort to find them.

—Jane Hirshfield

CONTRIBUTING POETS

SHERMAN ALEXIE · A.R. AMMONS · MARGARET ATWOOD
DAVID AXELROD · JOHN BARGOWSKI · MARVIN BELL
SIMEON BERRY · ELIZABETH BISHOP · ROBERT BLY
TODD BOSS · JOHN CAGE · JIM DANIELS
ALISON HAWTHORNE DEMING · XUE DI · ADAM DICKINSON
EMILY DICKINSON · DAVID DODD LEE · ALAN DUGAN
DONNA J. GELAGOTIS LEE · HARRY GILONIS
MARK HALPERIN · ROBERT HASS · WILLIAM HEYEN
CHRISTOPHER HOWELL · ANDREW HUDGINS
CHARLOTTE INNES · LOUIS JENKINS
LAURA KASISCHKE · BASMA KAVANAGH
CHRISTINE BOYKA KLUGE · YUSEF KOMUNYAKAA
TED KOOSER · MAXINE KUMIN · ANN LAUINGER
DORIANNE LAUX · D.H. LAWRENCE · JEFF MANN
DAVID MASON · W.S. MERWIN · MARY OLIVER · ALLAN PETERSON
SYLVIA PLATH · ROBERT MICHAEL PYLE · ALBERTO RIOS
PATTIANN ROGERS · MICHAEL J. ROSEN · KAY RYAN
TOMAZ SALAMUN · LYNNE SHAPIRO · R. T. SMITH
GARY SNYDER · WILLIAM STAFFORD · GERALD STERN
ARTHUR SZE · LEE UPTON · SIDNEY WADE
ROBERT PENN WARREN · MICHAEL WATER · RICHARD WILBUR
NANCE VAN WINCKEL · JANE WHITLEDGE · ROBERT WRIGLEY
W. B. YEATS · DAVID YOUNG · GARY YOUNG



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Yusef Komunyakaa

SLIME MOLDS

They're here. Among blades
Of grass, like divided cells.
Between plant & animal. Good
For nothing. In a rain storm, spores

Glom together. Yellow-white
Pieces of a puzzle. Unable to be
Seen till united. Something
Left over from a world before—

Beyond modern reason. Primeval
Fingers reduced & multiplied
A hundredfold, the most basic
Love & need shape them into a belief

System. The color of scrambled eggs.
Good for something we never thought
About, these pets of aliens crawl up
The Judas trees in bloom.

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LOST HORSE PRESS
105 Lost Horse Lane
Sandpoint, Idaho 83864

Voice: 208.255.4410 · Fax: 208.255.1560
Email: losthorsepress@mindspring.com
Web: www.losthorsepress.org

OR FROM THE EDITORS:

Kelly Chadwick & Renée Roehl
720 West Park Place
Spokane, WA 99205

Voice: 509.327.0350
Email: professorficus@gmail.com