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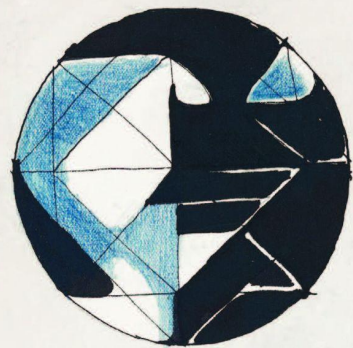
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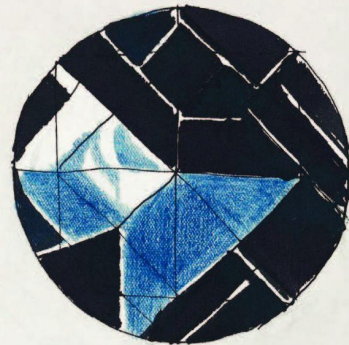
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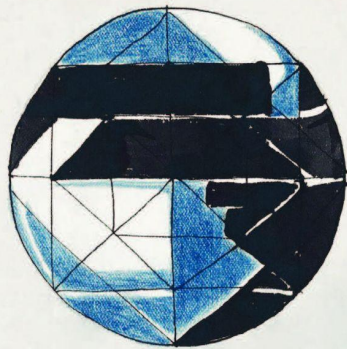
BOOK COVERS



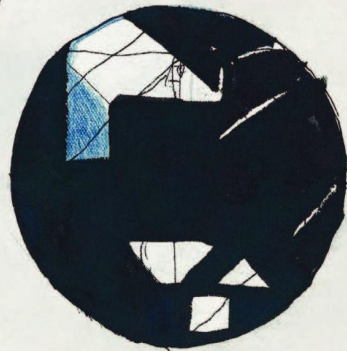
**THE
BOOK**



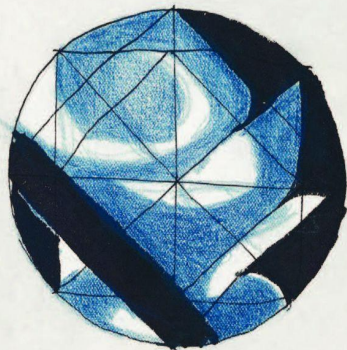
poems



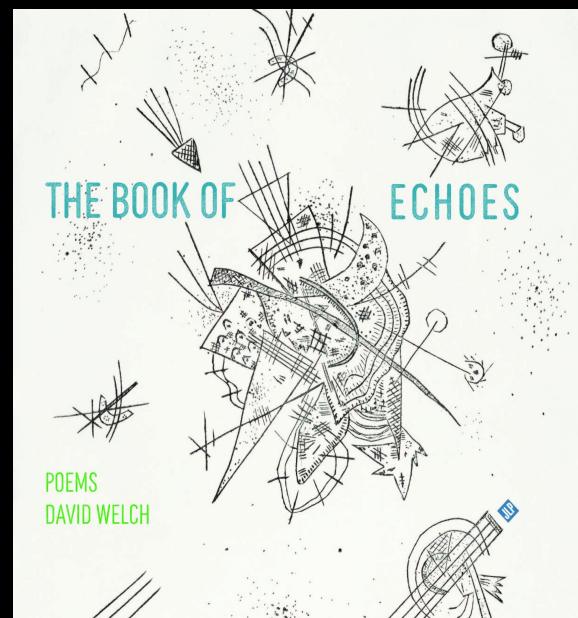
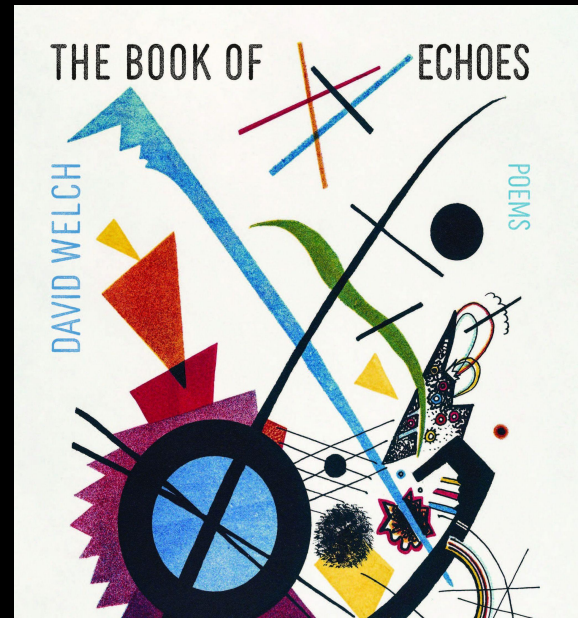
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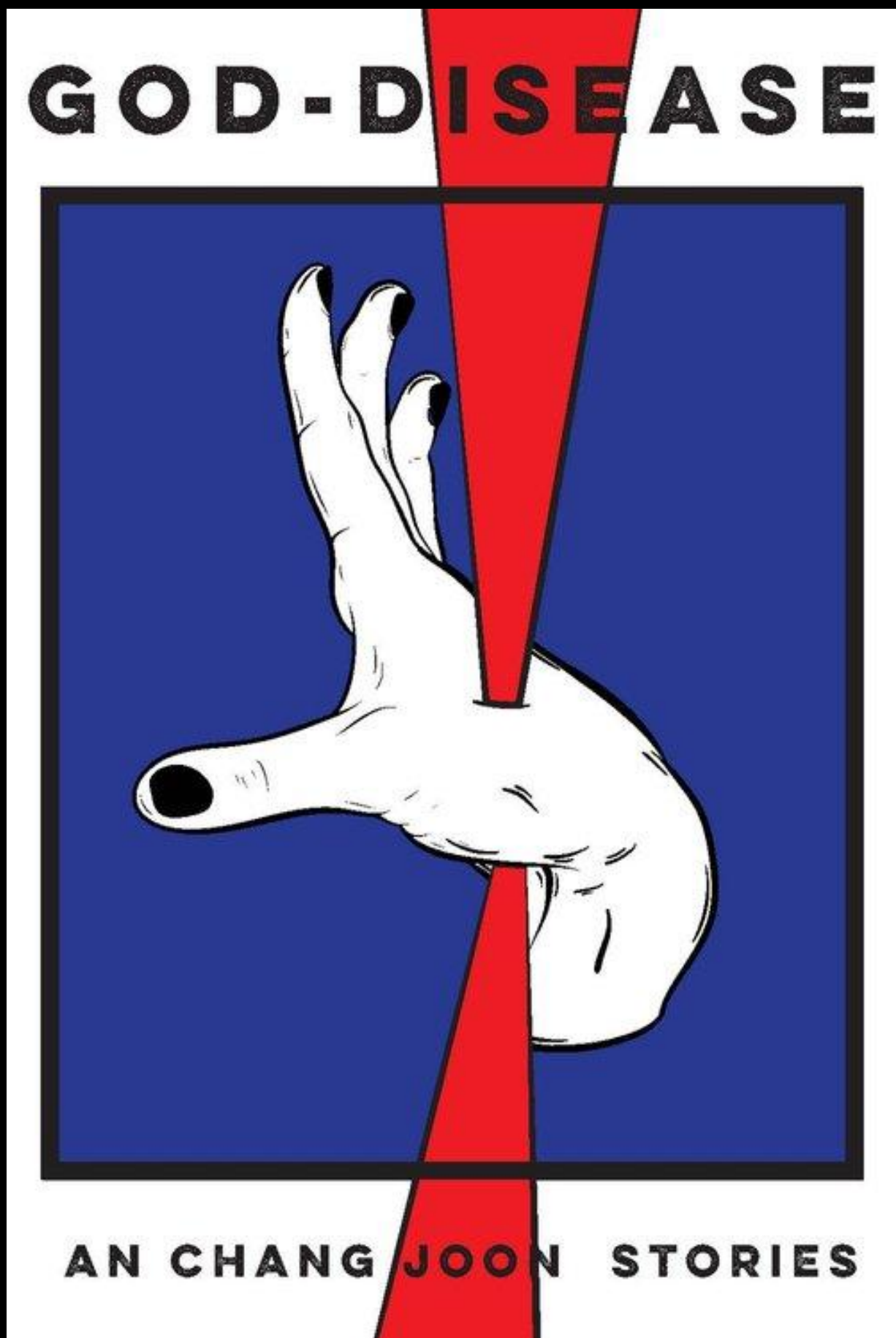
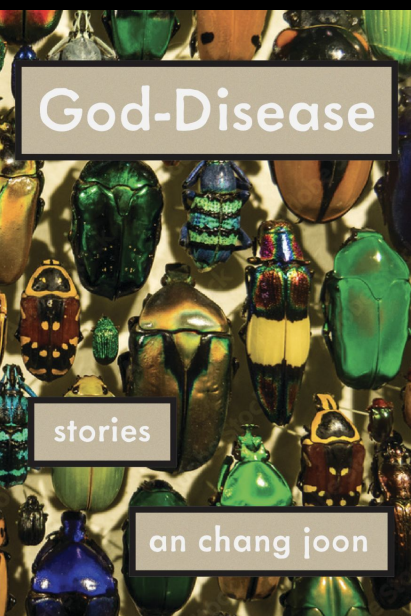
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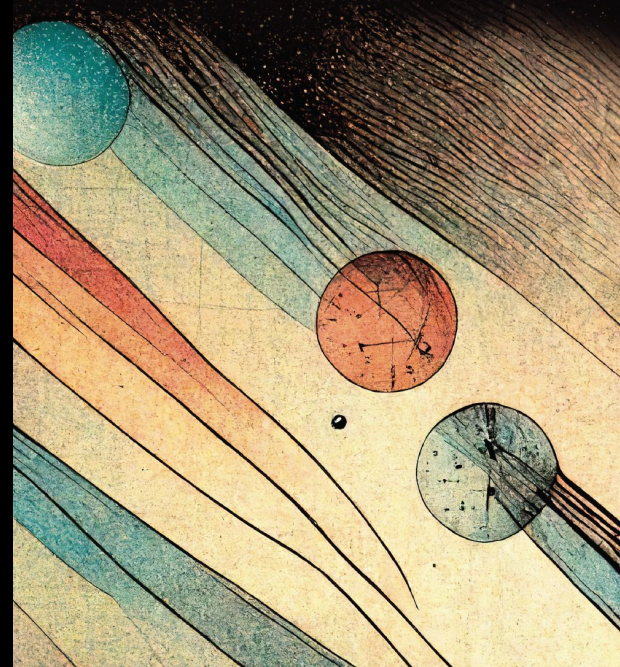
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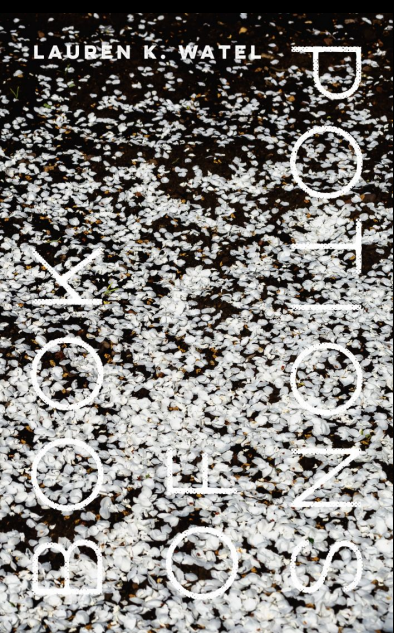
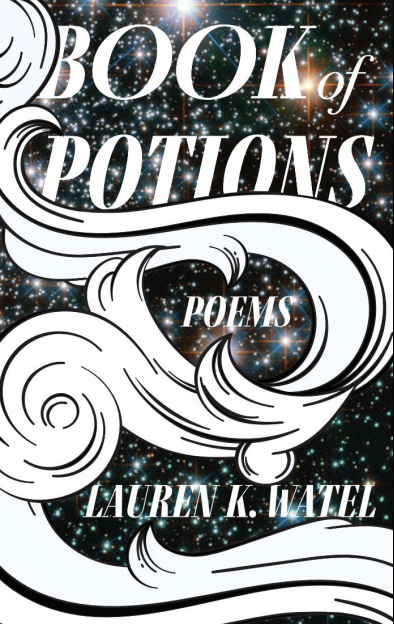
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TEAM PHOTOGRAPH

TEAM PHOTOGRAPH

HALDEMAN

LAUREN
HALDEMAN



In her extraordinary... which masterfully... ry and elements o... Haldeman layers th... over the battlefield... Run Regional Park... her soccer team w... compete. The park... town of Fairfax Sta... landscape for the b... rator regularly enc... sions of wounded s... artifacts of war—"w... faceless shapes" flo... night, and bullet s... human bones surfac... fields in daylight. Th... poetry and history t... town and its blood... attachment to injust... to restore erased ide... *graph* is a journey fr... mination, and the r... powerful reckoning... proof that the past... inexorably fused tog...

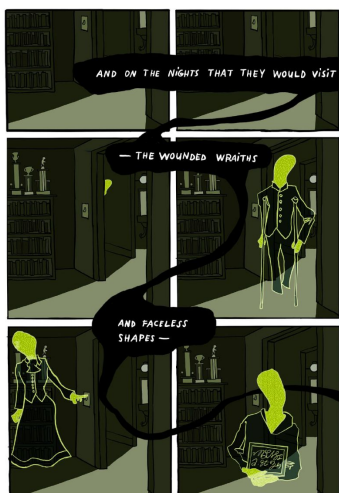
INTERIORS



TEAM PHOTO GRAPH

LAUREN HALDEMAN

Sarabande Books
Louisville, KY



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OUT THERE ON THE FIELD,



BUOYED BY FORESTS,



54



I WAS A CLEAR SHAPE MORPHING,



I WAS THE OPPOSITE OF BONES;



55

TEAM PHOTOGRAPH

Today is Team Photograph. You must join
Team at the brink of the field. Look.

What they say goes. It is all
In the way you wear your socks. And someone

May come, may point you out. Here there are chirps—
Trees—It is cold. It is

The brink of the field where trees
Are bruising. Episodes of trees, broken-

Pencil, animal. I am number 4 on Team. They have
Asked me not to kneel. They have asked me

Questions at the brink of the field. I knelt down, meaning
To just kneel down & they all stopped. You noticed they stopped &

Everything occurs on the brink of the field. Counting
Occurs, Moving slowly up. Afterward, you felt

You could hold your head and pretend
It was already a skull. You felt you could hold your head instead

Of calling out what
Word a mouth makes.

The photographer making the
Field with his shutter, lining Team up, making

40

Perfect lines. Everyone checking their socks, you noticed
They stopped. Holding your head,

You see your socks. Counting, beginning to
Count, beginning to watch on the brink of the field

A sharp shadow of something
Moving slowly up.

I. ARSON IS SUSPECTED IN FIRE AT HISTORIC SITE

Washington Post | July 28, 1993

house the
where black people traveling
between Warrenton and Alexandria
would spend the night,
no no
you can't bear
it
as
looking at
what was once a
freed slave's home might
not be
great
to think about

102

II. ARSON IS SUSPECTED IN FIRE AT HISTORIC SITE

Washington Post | July 28, 1993

house the as
historic
black
out
The house you can't
look into
The House
removed
around the children
who lived there
The Robinson House
on the northeastern edge of
a gust
of hate

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Ricky

&
other love
stories

Whitney
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Acknowledgments

Red Flags

The first thing Ilona saw when she got to the beach was the man, bleeding from his leg with a crowd of people around him. She was far up and away in Phil's condominium, looking down at him from the master bedroom window with her two suitcases in her hands. The man held out his bleeding leg for everyone to admire. Half of the crowd looked down at the leg, half looked out at the ocean. After a minute, the man spread his arms out wide as if to show everyone how much he loved them.

Thississ much.

"It faces the beach, see? Just like I promised." Phil came up behind Ilona and palmed her breasts. "What a view, huh?" But Phil wasn't looking at the view. He had his short face in Ilona's long neck and was missing out on the man and the leg and the crowd, which was just fine by Ilona. When Phil went out into the condominium's kitchen, to show her sons some sort of fishing

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contraption, Ilona went right up to the window, still holding her luggage, and kissed the glass. She had been darkly depressed about herself and her life the whole trip down, and then the man with the bleeding leg appeared and something lightened in her. There was still some good in the world.

The first night, Ilona pretended to sleep in the guest room, to set a good example, but when she could hear her sons breathing deeply from the adjacent room and knew they were asleep, she went into the master bedroom and got into bed with Phil. She had accepted Phil's proposal mostly—no, *entirely*—because she was penniless. Her husband had drunk himself to death because of the debt, and all she was was a speech therapist. How was she to pay for her youngest's lung medication, much less electricity and soap? It only made sense to sleep with someone like Phil, even if the new ring lay on her finger like a lead bullet.

Ilona got under the cold sheets and let Phil root around on her while she squeezed her eyes together and thought about the man with the bleeding leg. This time, Ilona was down at the beach and the man was right in front of her, lifting his leg up just for her to see. The blood ran from his knee to his ankle, and Ilona bent over and licked the man from ankle to knee. Then she straddled his leg and pushed against him, riding up the length of his leg until she was at his waist and he was inside of her. Ilona heard herself gasp, then scream, then the man put his hand over her mouth and dragged her into the ocean. He kept Ilona underwater until she could be quiet for good.

When Ilona woke up, it was three in the morning. She got up from Phil's bed and went back to the guest room where she could

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not sleep. She lay awake until dawn, thinking of all the terrible mistakes she had ever made. Once, after her youngest had been in the hospital for a week on a ventilator, she had come home to shower and had gotten angry, very angry, at her oldest. It had been about shoes or laundry or money, and she'd slapped him across the chin so hard she could hear his teeth clap together like two plates. Ilona could still see the look on his face. It were as if she'd told him she wished she'd never had him. Had she said that? Maybe she had. What difference did it make? The damage was the same. Ilona rolled over, overcome with love for her sons and hatred for herself, and cried face down in a pillow that Phil's first wife had likely bought. Ilona wept off and on until she heard Phil up making coffee, then she willed herself to rise lest Phil take the boys fishing in some boat without her and her sons were drowned and she was never able to touch them again.

Later that afternoon, Ilona and her sons followed Phil down to the beach, where, with some difficulty, he put up a sun tent and unfolded four chairs. Ilona noticed he was quiet for a time after these efforts, to the extent that she wondered if he might have a secret violent streak. She began to imagine what her future held once the formalities wore off. They didn't know each other all that well. They'd been set up by bored mutual friends desperate for excitement. On the first date, both Phil and Ilona drank heavily. At one point, late in the night, they'd grown teary over their pasts, their presents, their futures. There had been sex on Phil's couch, then embarrassment. The second date had been more proper. The third, dull. Now, in two days, they were going to be married in a courthouse surrounded by palm trees. Phil had brought a yellow suit and Ilona a navy dress. The boys had

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