

Q and A

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After Sunstone

(St. Louis, *Farthest Heaven*, 2025)

1. What are the context and background of this collection of poems?

In summer 2024, I found myself wondering what to do with my life, specifically what I would do for work, and thought I would become a licensed truck driver — the pay was decent, I could work alone and there were always plenty of opportunities for employment. After looking into this process I realized I lacked the background or desire to make such a drastic change of vocation.

By this time I had published 2 novels which did little to elevate my status as an author. I thought I might not publish anything else. Novel-writing did not interest me, and the book project I'd been working on was at a standstill, more or less abandoned, which didn't bother me at all.

At a restaurant in Edmonton, having decided I wouldn't be a truck driver, or an author, in tears, I received an email from Tom Will with word that William Ballard was founding a new press called Farthest Heaven. They were bringing out Tom's collection *American Cats Are In a Big Country*. Tom wondered what I was up to, writing-wise.

I did have a file of poems with work dating back over 10 years, a file I'd been adding to and taking away from for all that time. Some of the material wasn't acceptable to me anymore while other pieces were, but didn't seem to fit together in a collection. Following some preliminary edits I sent about 80 pages to Tom and Bill and this began the careful process of readying a still nameless book for print.

2. What are some elements of your writing process that were involved in its creation?

I've come to think of my writing procedure as an economy of process. Ideas, images and language move from the mind to the page, back to the mind, perhaps into discursive spaces of conversation and critique, back again to the mind, and the page. The text is transformed at each stage and either decreases or increases in value. Economy and value not of commodity exchange but in reference to the transformational quality of a poem, its trueness, and by trueness I mean fidelity to the presence of its own becoming in a world always becoming. *After Sunstone* developed over years in this way without knowing what it was or would be until it had become.

3. What approach informed your revising of this work and readying it for publication?

The approach to revision was a collaborative one, between William Ballard, Tom Will and myself. It was, for me, at least, an expression of honour and trust, and a gesture of fellowship. Honour on their part, because, after all, they were my texts — there was something we all saw in them which had to be preserved. Trust on my part, that their suggestions would enhance, not diminish, the text. Fellowship, because I saw the project as an effort shouldered in common for an ideal end. There were times when I accepted and times when I rejected

suggestions, and times when I insisted on a compromise, all toward the book's ideal composition.

4. What are some of the key traits that distinguish this collection of poems from your previous writings?

Ambition characterizes my 2 novels while modesty defines this collection. The ego has wilted. I think of the language as more receded, more reluctant to draw attention to itself as a vehicle for an attitude we might call style. The distances of time between and changes in circumstance surrounding different poems in the book preclude a style or voice that would unify the text. It is, instead, a multivocal arrangement grouped conceptually.

5. What do you hope to see resonate with readers in this poetry collection?

The cryptic eye