

poetry, and Jason Koo's voice executes perfect pitch.

—Sandra Marchetti

Particle and Wave by Benjamin Landry. Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 2014. 63 pages, \$18.00, paper.

Particle and Wave, Benjamin Landry's debut collection from the University of Chicago's Phoenix Poets series, explores the intersection of the human and the scientific in a series of poems named after and about the Periodic Table of Elements. Each title is presented as a tile from the table, complete with the atomic weight and the symbol for each element, instantly creating an atmosphere for the poems. In "[Helium]," for example, the reader is instantly met with all the connotations of the gas—the way balloons float upward when filled with it, the way it changes the pitch of the voice—and the understanding of the poem becomes colored by these. "[Helium]" floats across the page, with white space between many of the lines, and the first line directly addresses the element, how it's the "setter of things into motion."

When *Particle and Wave* begins, the "you" seems to be the elements referenced in each poem's title, but this relationship grows more complex as the book winds on. In "[Barium]," for instance, the "you" has been transformed from element to person, as Landry describes, "the sliver of [their] features— / triangular nose, almond eyes." The objects of Landry's poems grow more tangible as they go on, the speaker no longer speaking to just a scattering of protons and electrons but instead to the living creatures that those molecules create. By the time "[Uranium]" arrives, the relationship between atom and other is as strained as can be—"we split the atom," Landry writes, an implication that the other is no longer part of the Uranium, or any other element, but instead has been turned into a scientist, or

else into a more human object that was once merely a gathering of one single element. In this poem, the other becomes an active participant:

You can still drive past the McMansion
on 23
and see where they ran out of loans.
The windows are particle board.
Exasperated or praying for rain.

This was supposed to be a
spring ...

Particle and Wave is a book that leaves its reader questioning what's real and what isn't. In "[Uranium]," what's real? Not the wood from the windows, and not the mansions those particle board windows occupy, and who's to say if the "you" driving that car is real either, or instead just a manifestation of the elements.

The strength of Landry's collection is this uncertainty. In "[Thulium]," when the speaker says to the "you" that "we might have been siblings. / Instead, you are backyard sales," the reader is left trying to parse the layers, trying to decipher who this other really is. In these moments, Landry shows his strength as a writer, digging deeper and deeper into this relationship between science and individual, between what nature creates and what the human creates.

—Justin Carter, *MAR*

The Empire Rolls by Trudy Lewis. Springfield, Missouri: Moon City Press, 2014. 336 pages, \$16.95, paper.

With lyrical language and unabashed realism, Trudy Lewis, in her novel, *The Empire Rolls*, creates a compelling narrative that weaves together the passion and charisma of roller derby with political injustice during harsh economic times.

The Empire Rolls centers on the lives of Sally LaChance, a devoted park ranger and emcee at The Empire Roller Rink, and Jared Mayweather, a struggling videographer who has recently found out that he is a father to a four-year-old girl. After Sally discovers a trio of men polluting Karst Park with waste, she finds herself involved in a reckless act of anger, an act that jeopardizes not only her career, but her life. A dynamic cast of characters includes Chaz, the owner of The Empire Roller Rink, who uses his power to control and sexualize the roller derby team; Gabriella, a recent war vet who is put into a coma after an incident on the rink; and Etta, the heart-melting four-year-old daughter of Jared Mayweather. Lewis is able to bridge the gap between cultural backgrounds to illustrate that the pursuit of happiness is a human universal.

The Empire Rolls is stylistically ambitious. Alternating between first- and third-person point of view, Lewis illuminates the seedy atmosphere of drugs and sex through raw, yet sensual, language. The novel is both lyrical and bold, revealing a masterful storyteller who has the skill and control to intertwine the natural beauty of the outdoors with the gritty atmosphere of the roller derby rink. In moments of unadorned beauty, Lewis allows the reader to see the park through Sally's eyes: "The sun is coming down on the forest, the denuded branches revisited with color—brutal pink and acid orange layered like a psychedelic parfait in the sky."

Though there are strings of romance threaded between the lines, this is certainly not your average romantic tale. Throughout the novel, the reader will cheer when Sally stands up against injustice, fume when she sees her beloved dog wounded, and sigh when she concludes:

What does it matter, how long this happiness lasts? It could stretch out to fill a whole lifetime in a few minutes. It could blow away in the next windstorm.

Or it could just keep changing form and following me around.

This is a story about mothers and daughters, fathers and daughters, friends and lovers, and, ultimately, *The Empire Rolls* is a story about the ties that bind us, and the bonds that can tear us apart.

—Abigail Rose, *MAR*

Motherland Fatherland Homelandsexuals by Patricia Lockwood. New York, New York: Penguin, 2014. 66 pages, \$20.00, paper.

I like to think that we're living in the future, an age of experimentation, of showing the world how much it's changed. Because when aren't we? I charge poets today with delivering this transformation, and all too often my first instinct when reading a new book is to shake it and yell.

I did not expect this sensation when digging into the latest from the internet's favorite poet, Patricia Lockwood, and I'm gratefully here to report I was correct. This is perhaps because Lockwood is so much more than an "internet poet." Much has been made already about her online presence and insatiable voice, but in *Motherland Fatherland Homelandsexuals*, something vastly more interesting and important is happening: the reconciliation of the pastoral and the future. Since before de Crèvecoeur, writers have been making their best with the North American landscape, and here is one of the strongest contemporary collections focused on elevating that conversation into the now. It is a beacon. It demands we take note of where and who we are.

This is most prominent in poems like "An Animorph Enters the Doggie-Dog World." As the speaker learns to cope with portions of her body taking on animal characteristics—in a fashion similar to that popularized by the young adult series—she notices her "sight and