

and ice storms damage trees. “Most things will recover,” is the narrator’s hopeful, though somewhat reserved, comment. The poem ends with lines that display the poet’s characteristic compassion and hint at human culpability and responsibility:

I worry about the girl though, what was done to her  
and the way people talk, a mix of sympathy and gossip, salt  
and cinders thrown out by plow trucks, grass not growing  
near the road, some of it torn up and needing to be reseeded.

Here, as throughout the collection, Davis does not aim to push at the edges of style or form. Instead he strives for clarity and depth. His unique accomplishment is to intertwine the vicissitudes of all species in a way that is natural and authentic.

Poet Tim Lilburn defines contemplation as “a form of knowing that strains across distance between mind and world and aims to end in union with what it seeks.” It is, he says, a desire to know what remains unknowable; a yearning to “[live] in the world as if it were home.” Such knowing can never be complete and the yearned-for union may never be fully realized. And yet for Davis, it seems clear, both are worth striving for. His poems are born out of contemplation that results from unhurried and faithful attention, season after season, to the whole spectrum of native species.

In an age when we are regularly alerted to the alarming extinction of species, and to violence being done to creatures great and small, *Native Species* invites us to marvel. But it also offers a timely reminder that it is not enough to look *at*, we must also look *after*, our planet and its many inhabitants.

Sarah Klassen  
Winnipeg, Manitoba

### Works Cited

Lilburn, Tim. *Living In The World As If It Were Home*. Toronto: Cormorant Books, 1999.

Ann Hostetler, *Safehold*. Telford, PA: Cascadia Publishing House, 2018. DreamSeeker Poetry Series 15. Pp. 95. Softcover, \$12.95.

It is not surprising that in seasons of great reckoning or transition, we turn to art forms like poetry—born out of great flurries of emotion and energy, but also practiced stillness—to help steady us.

If a book of poems also nudges me along in my daily living when I feel especially numb, unseen, or overwhelmed, I consider it an inherited map I will want (and need) to reopen. *Safehold*, Ann Hostetler's anticipated second collection, shows us how to more fully be in a world that is always *both/and* instead of *either/or*—the book is local and international; interior and communal; rooted in history and reaching out with curiosity, honesty, and forgiveness in order to keep moving forward. Choosing to be in such a world long term is no small feat for any of us, but Hostetler's collection reads like an intergenerational love letter inviting us into an expanded family. Ultimately, it offers a map to more open-hearted living.

Organized through five sections where we witness the speaker building a life that enlarges the physical, emotional, and spiritual boundaries of past Amish and Mennonite generations, the overall arc of the collection shows some of the growth, vulnerability, and wonder that the next generation can inherit. Several poems in "Part One: Songs for Ancestors" consider this process of growth and vulnerability together. "I wonder as I dig what fruit will grow," the speaker shares in "Heirlooms," the book's opening poem. "All my life I've tried to live as though / the body were the soul. As though planting / and reaping were prayer." In "Being Seen," the speaker acts as a model for her mother during a painting session, and reflects on how we start learning to accept and judge our bodies at a young age: "I could feel her gaze on me—appraising, / an object she owned, she'd made." Even as a child, the speaker is not passive: to feel safe and seen the way she *wants* to be seen, she chooses what items will be in the painting alongside her.

The arts play a pivotal role in the speaker's evolving faith and selfhood as the collection moves from her childhood into adulthood, from motherhood into grandmotherhood, and finally as she learns to navigate life after her parents are gone. Singing, dancing, writing, painting, and drawing are all repeated actions spanning the collection, and are presented as a way to help make sense of aging and family itself. The fact that the collection ends with "Dancing with Mennonites"—recalling a brief moment when the speaker can rest joyfully in her current body, and know that the community will care for her children's bodies while she is absent—serves as a celebration of the past, and can be read as a hopeful benediction for a future season.

Several poems in the book retrace Hostetler's early understanding of her Anabaptist heritage, and gently examine a family still healing from excommunication. Others, however, lean into the ecumenical in their titles or subject matter, sometimes to articu-

late a deeper understanding or response to an Anabaptist teaching, and sometimes in simple search of the holy. We follow her into Episcopal and Baptist churches first; as we move into “Part Two: Travelers,” we find ourselves in the cathedrals and ruins of Germany. These are sacred spaces where “people in head coverings / suspenders, plain suits, tank tops, T-shirts, shorts, makeup / nose rings, sing full throated in four-part harmony / about death and salvation.” They are spaces where readers are reminded of the realities of war, but also the possibilities of rebirth: “From the rubble, reborn. / Every fallen stone numbered, / then set beside the new.”

The poems in *Safehold* are themselves spaces where the speaker both questions and seeks solace. “Like Noah, I build an ark,” the title poem in *Safehold* observes, “gathering what I love inside— / this frail coracle of words.” Alongside meditations on marriage, travel, and family, the collection gathers reflections on what it means to nurture and be nurtured by alternative families, including those offered by a writing life, a yoga community, and an ever-growing family tree of college students. It considers infertility, long-distance relationships, self-harm, gun violence, gender identity transitioning; it considers deep sadness over climate chaos, dementia, and unexpected injuries. Hostetler does not shy away from the realities of being in a physical body in this difficult world, making this a collection important and relatable to contemporary readers in search of honest explorations of faith. Indeed, Hostetler’s poetic map brings up questions I wish more places of worship would also ask, such as *How can we learn to accept and love our bodies? What trauma has been passed down from one generation to the next, and what part might we play in healing it? What might a decision to stop the practice of shunning—in all its various forms—look like in different communities, churches, and families?*

*Safehold* not only further establishes Hostetler’s creative voice, it also widens her legacy as a creative writing mentor. I am surely not alone in not knowing a growing community of Mennonite-affiliated poets existed until someone handed me a copy of the anthology *A Cappella: Mennonite Voices in Poetry*, which was edited by Hostetler in 2003. With this new collection, this community will continue to be inspired and challenged by Hostetler’s words and example. “[T]he only inheritance that matters, love / shared between and among us, / alive in our breath” she writes in “October Leaves.” May we, alive now in this world, follow this map whenever we can.

Becca J.R. Lachman  
Athens, Ohio