Patrick Friesen, *Outlasting the Weather: Selected and New Poems 1994–2020*. Vancouver: Anvil Press, 2020. Pp. 256. Softcover, $20.

Like many, I came to know Patrick Friesen's work through his 1980 long poem *The Shunning*—a beautiful and heart-rending meditation on loss and what Miranda Joseph calls "the romance of community." But Friesen's work is vast, spanning theatre, poetry, prose, and film, and to many readers of this journal he will need no introduction. His latest project, *Outlasting the Weather,* is a collection of poems spanning the most recent quarter-century of the author's substantial career, with selections from *A Broken Bowl* (1997), *St. Mary at Main* (1998), *The Breath You Take from the Lord* (2002), *Earth's Crude Gravities* (2007), *Jumping in the Asylum* (2011), *A Dark Boat* (2012), *A Short History of Crazy Bone* (2015), and *Songen* (2018). The volume also includes approximately fifty pages of fascinating new work from Friesen. The publisher's cover copy proclaims that "This collection rejects wisdom; rather it is infused with the kind of knowing that comes from having weathered many seasons yet still remaining open to wonder." This openness to wonder is evident as one reads across the decades of work collected in the book, but there is clearly wisdom in its pages, as well—though certainly not the preachy or didactic kind of "wisdom" that would prescribe simple answers to the complex questions of this life.

By providing readers an overview of decades of Friesen's work, *Outlasting the Weather* follows the form of his 1994 collection, *Blasphemer's Wheel*, which did the same for the preceding years. In reading this most recent collection, I was most drawn to the evocative, early, and untitled poems from *A Broken Bowl*. Here, Friesen juxtaposes and entangles theology and science ("how god and darwin dance"), life and language ("the world scattered with grammar"), and maternity and paternity ("your mother with her guilt your father with his amnesia"), as well as justice and economic power ("I am the law of the land the liturgy of wealth"), and catastrophe ("world going down"). The result is thrilling and provocative. Although Friesen repeatedly employs the evocative phrase "I am," he is not bound by a singular perspective. In fact, it is clear that he does not always speak of, or even for, himself, and so we readers can hear through him the voices of many. And when he writes "we are," his communal "we" is always shot through with mystery. "we are romans," he writes at one point; "we worship everything, nothing is sacred." Who is the "we" here, one wonders, to whom nothing is sacred? This is such an interesting reformulation of a longstanding

theological, political, and poetic problem, reminding us of the ever-troubled and never-simple distinction between religion and secularity that has obviously animated much of Friesen's work. When he writes of "the silences of history" and "the horrible serenity of the human machine without desire," one feels these entangled oppositions deepen.

Friesen deserves the gratitude of Mennonites and others who will read his work from inside and outside of the ever-blooming conversation on Mennonite/s Writing. Mystery, wonder, and creative ambiguity—these things jump from the pages of *Outlasting the Weather*, and challenge the cold and dissociative temptations of academic writing about artistic works that bind scholars to tired old dualisms. Perhaps this theme of connection rather than distance is like the awakening angel he describes in the first poem in the collection, one drawn from *St. Mary at Main*: "as towers fall away / and false Gods / shut their gobs." The figures of "blind missionaries" and martyrs, "the nomad" and "the wolf," and the city that is "collapsing / into its own memory" are just at the edge of comprehension—if comprehension would mean possessing an unpossessable mystery.

Reading across the selections that reflect decades of Friesen's work reveals growth, to be sure, but also a number of persistent themes that have occupied his thinking. Given the many images of homelessness and displacement that dot the pages, it is tempting to picture Friesen as the figure he describes in his "clearing poems": "a faithless man standing his ground at the / edge of the clearing." Yet it is surely not a simple form of faithlessness or confessional exit that Friesen's work presents. Instead, it is a confluence of "angels" and "demons," and a confrontation with human suffering. How to reckon with the past and form meaningful and deep social bonds after and amidst traumatic returns? "we are this species in debt to the earth," he writes, "facing the hunger and / cold with our companions." Perhaps taking this line-break seriously is also Friesen's concern: that we should not be cold with our companions. Some readers may find his cursing and erotic imagination a challenge, but those who have, as Friesen puts it, searched for stories and found themselves "choking / on the one you've been given" will recognize themselves in the work. Dogs, love, dreaming, and beauty accompany his critiques like a salve on a wound.

The thirty-two new poems in the collection are also a treat for the thoughtful reader. As promised by the word "outlasting" in the title, each one seems to have to do with enduring the passage of time. Friesen writes of "the moment" and "extinction," of a "mesolithic mind," of "thunder from another time," of an "ancient romance,"

and so on. "Who Can Outlast the Weather?" asks the title of one poem. In some ways, the implied answer of this collection is "no one," as we are all shown to be finite, embodied and fragile. And yet another way to read the full collection is to focus on the poetry's celebration of the ideas, stories, and artistic mysteries that endure as seasons change. "the stories are all shifting, negotiations breaking off," he writes, only to add: "I can sleep in this burning house."

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Jeff Gundy, *Wind Farm: Landscape with Stories and Towers*. Cincinnati: Dos Madres, 2022. Pp. 172. Softcover, $22 US.

In his latest book, *Wind Farm: Landscape with Stories and Towers*, Jeff Gundy describes a guitar he inherited as "always ready to make any sound I can shape with my two hands my restless worried mind." Some of that sound has spilled delightfully onto these "stories and towers." In *Wind Farm,* "Towers" refers directly to the massive wind turbines dotting the landscape and interrupting the horizon across the Illinois farmland Gundy grew up on, but the stories in the collection are often just as monumental. His contemplative and circumspect tour of this landscape is both troubling and beautiful, as confrontation with the environmental and social cost of technological progress, especially industrial agriculture, is met with the wit, humour, and warmth of remembering days less complicated by the concerns of adulthood. But this is not escapism, or worse, that toxic impulse of nostalgia. Gundy's signature attention to both the obvious and peculiar details of the material worlds in which he was raised invite us to reflect on the forces that shape us into who we are, even forces as intangible and fleeting as the wind.

Wind Farm is not an easy book to place in terms of genre. Nonfiction, yes. Creative non-fiction, probably. In the cover matter Elizabeth Dodd calls it a "lyric memoir, prose-poem meditation," and these descriptors work well. Like Julia Spicher Kasdorf's *Shale Play*, it's a multimodal text, pairing photos and words and inviting us to consider our relationship to the environment and each other. Notably, Gundy complements his own work alongside photos and text from other sources—from epigraphs invoking William Stafford, Eliza Farnham, and Sofia Samatar to photographs gleaned from friends, family, and the 1970 Flanagan High School Syllabus—which contribute to the rich conversation he nurtures. The book is a