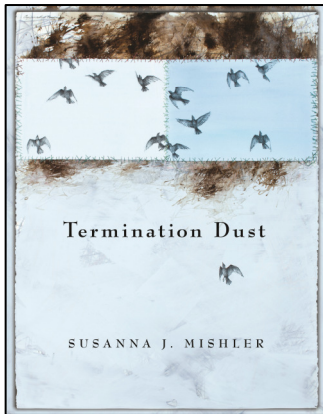




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Termination Dust

Poetry by Susanna J. Mishler
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Susanna J. Mishler “pays meticulous attention to the elements of a ravishing, damaged, stern-but-fragile world; she uncovers real beauty in the linkages. And makes real beauty too” (Linda Gregerson).

Termination Dust, the first high-altitude snowfall, marks the end of summer in Alaska. Rooted in the seasons and sense of place, the poems in this collection employ image-driven lyric and dreamlike narrative to grapple with questions of death and belonging. A strange romance between inner and outer landscapes emerges from what increasingly seem like the prayers of an atheist. A tree becomes “a vascular connection / between kingdoms,” and the human eye “a hole / hungry for small beauties.” Full of vivid animal, human, and ghostly encounters, the poems in *Termination Dust* are a kind of spiritual notebook for the unbeliever, forging their way to an earthbound grace.

Praise for *Termination Dust*

“In the high latitudes where Susanna Mishler has trained her eye and temperament, sunlight is precious and absolute. Its winter absence, its summer return, the very increments of solstice and equinox are far more sharply drawn than in our milder, vaguer climates. We feel its northern brilliance in her every line. In one of the poems in this magical volume, ‘A welder’s / hammer strikes on slag and uncovers / a bright new seam,’ which might serve very well as a figure for Mishler’s own poetic achievement. She works with a bold instrument; she pays meticulous attention to the elements of a ravishing, damaged, stern-but-fragile world; she uncovers real beauty in the linkages. And makes real beauty too.”

—Linda Gregerson

“It’s easy to forget that gentleness is its own form of brilliance, but this lesson abounds in Susanna Mishler’s welcome debut. Well, ‘lesson’ is too rigid a word. In *Termination Dust*, we return to the poetic line as that unit that takes measure of the human heart even as it reaches into the margin’s icy blank. This lyric measure, this ethic of Mishler’s line, doesn’t treat of the human condition as if it is symptomatic of error and in need of cure. It celebrates the mild fever her poetry also causes—a heat that eases thought and opens it so that thought again becomes feeling’s necessary home. Mishler’s poems, each one of them in their fine craft, do this work: her lines capture those moments we have let go astray—somehow like a child who is lost without knowing he is lost—and coaxes them back into meaning. It is subtle work, often humorous, always necessary, this reminder—every line’s bright and gentle hint, that it matters, all of it, life and those living it.”

—Dan Beachy-Quick

Biographical Note

Susanna J. Mishler’s poems have appeared in numerous journals, such as *The Iowa Review*, *Mid-American Review*, and *Kenyon Review Online*. She lives in Anchorage, Alaska.