







## Vow

Jennifer Molnar

Harvest comes late, after the first snow fallen  
then forgotten. At the field's edge, crows strip

husks into shreds that curl like the husband's hair.  
Machinery swallows swaths of brittle stalks,

spits out dust. The crows huddle on a black branch,  
bear witness to the only promise not broken:

all that was given will soon be taken back.





## Tether

Rebecca Faulkner

I will no longer carve  
your name in bark

like you mean everything

gather shiny conkers  
for your return

what I thought  
was wrong with me

is not wrong

your swing is tethered  
to the horse-chestnut tree

I watch the rope twist  
back & forth

eager for newfound freedom





## Camp

Caridad Cole

I could hear  
the wind but I  
couldn't  
feel it. There was a

warmth  
on my skin  
that didn't quite match  
it: the cool

air moving  
around me.  
I look up,  
nothing's coming

down. To the side,  
a feather,  
trying  
to tickle my ear.

If it could, it would  
say, "stay,"  
telling sleepy lies.  
If I could,

I would  
feel the cold,  
unafraid,  
unexpectedly



warm as it goes. I would  
break every window  
to be  
a ubiquitous me; glass

as smooth as water.  
Pain  
for a pane. Warm veins  
for weather vanes. But

a house is  
a home.  
A ceiling fan to  
breeze over us.

I hear little  
branches  
fall on the roof  
at night.







## Annalee

Erin Matheson Ritchie

You fashioned yourself a black widow  
and me, a benevolent god –

hands big enough to hold the universe  
and small enough for pinky promises –

but Annalee, they weren't big enough to  
catch you when your web snapped.





## Celestials Know

Salvatore Difalco

Distant holiday flares redden  
the grey sky. Victoria Day is  
a thing here. Walking fast  
accomplishes two things.  
The country is nice but I miss  
the burning barrels of trash  
and the graffiti. For now I  
throw dogs on the grill  
and crack open Bud Lights.  
Even we must watch our waists  
or be condemned as unfit  
to serve our relative countries.  
In the midst of all this feathering,  
let me open a beach umbrella  
to block out the evening sun as it  
blazes down in the dusty west.  
The others stand around like  
monuments to a decadence  
exhausted by itself. Enough  
is enough as they used to say  
in the prefecture rose beds,  
after someone had pricked  
a thumb and suckled it like a teat.  
Before long a verdict will come  
and we'll know who was wrong  
and who was right, or who  
had pull behind the scenes.  
Roman candles burst at dusk.  
We sigh over warmish beer  
and tong the hot dogs on the grill.



## tomcat hunts swampland

airport

howling at the moon  
wasn't it enough  
it never was; swamps  
are chill and safe and slow  
and slow... weren't  
piles and stacks of concrete  
skyrises enough  
it never is; wouldn't  
it all sink into a swamp hole  
felt good? ideal?  
wasn't it enough, can't  
i zone out, zone in, be  
in the moment, and i feel  
when the sun shines over  
the cattails and reeds  
and i lock-in for a whole  
day, and know i'm  
helping, have purpose, but  
the moon will be  
back again, tonight, and  
tomorrow, with hardly a  
break, with only the  
feeble sun standing  
between me and lovely,  
lonely oblivion, wasn't it  
enough? to be wild  
and free and twenty?  
i'm older now but  
when will I stop  
being twenty, howling  
at the moon, regretting  
myself, and feeling like  
i've chained myself to  
a bed; can't i just  
read in bed and fall  
asleep?  
Someday, the tomcat  
will age, let go of  
the bird in palm,  
sink into the swamp  
and promptly  
somniaambulate.



## At 3am

Rebecca Faulkner

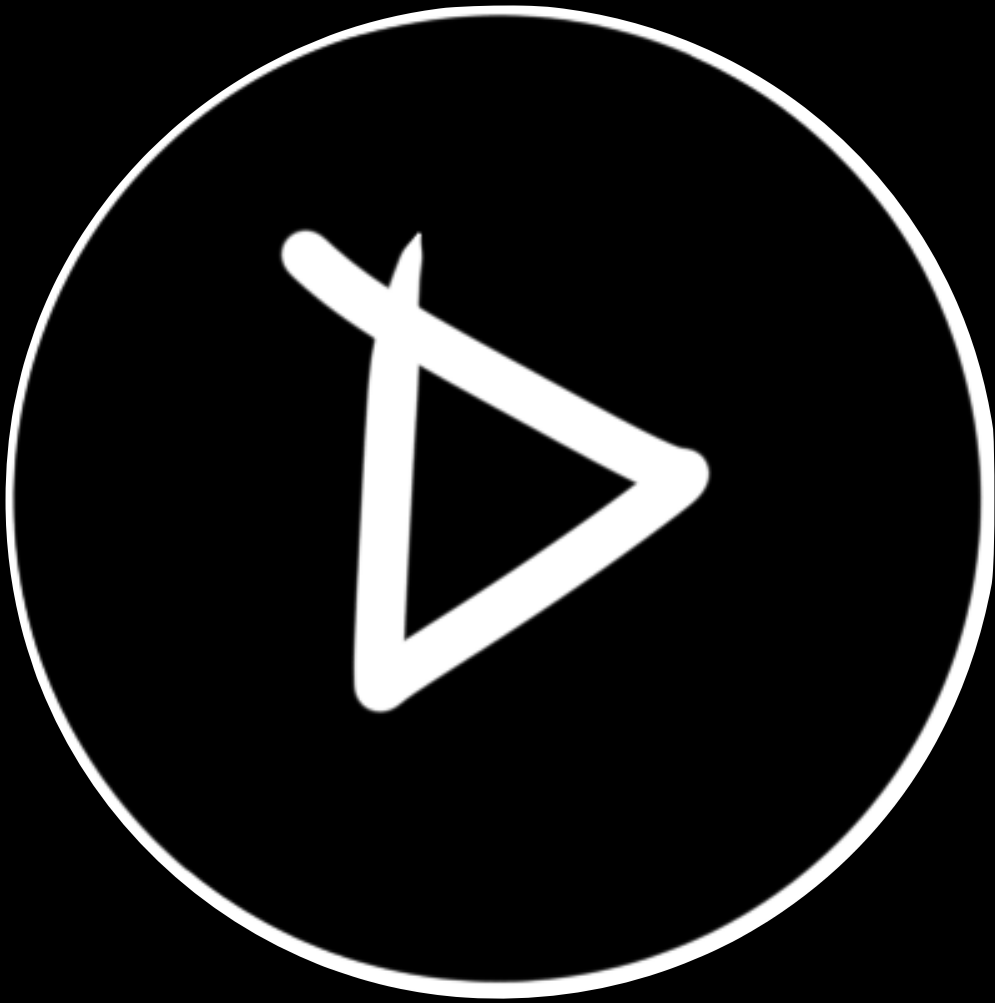
the room contains no sound  
but the rattle of a loose pane  
wind nodding yes        to the shimmy  
of security lights        weeds gather  
in the alley        giggling & pointing out

your shoes unlaced on the carpet

I know you meant to tie things up  
before you left        the night washed  
tall & clean        but in the hurry of endings  
we forgot the crocuses        trying so hard  
iced in a gray dawn







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“Vow” by Jennifer Molnar  
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“Annalee” by Erin Matheson Ritchie

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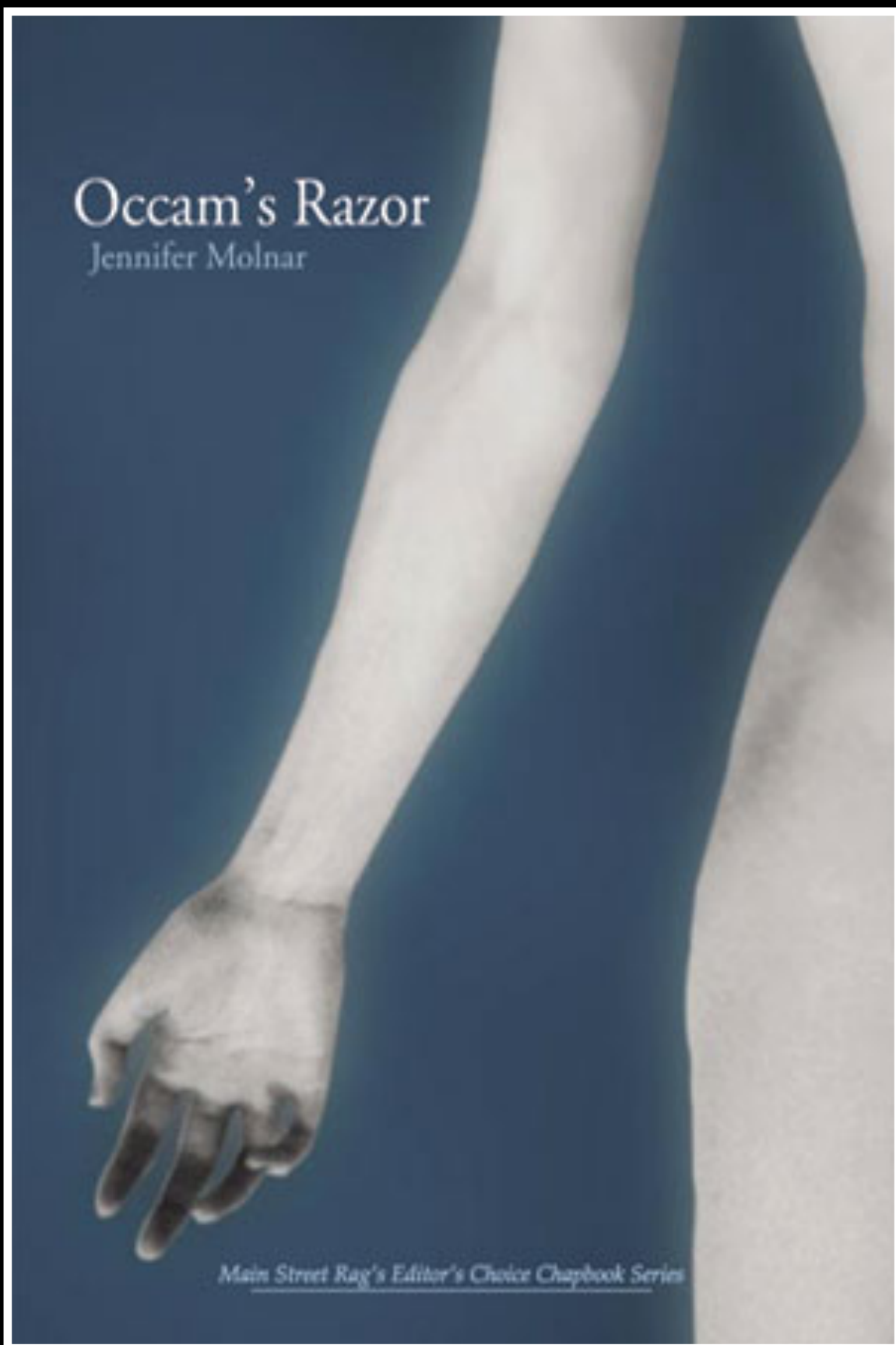
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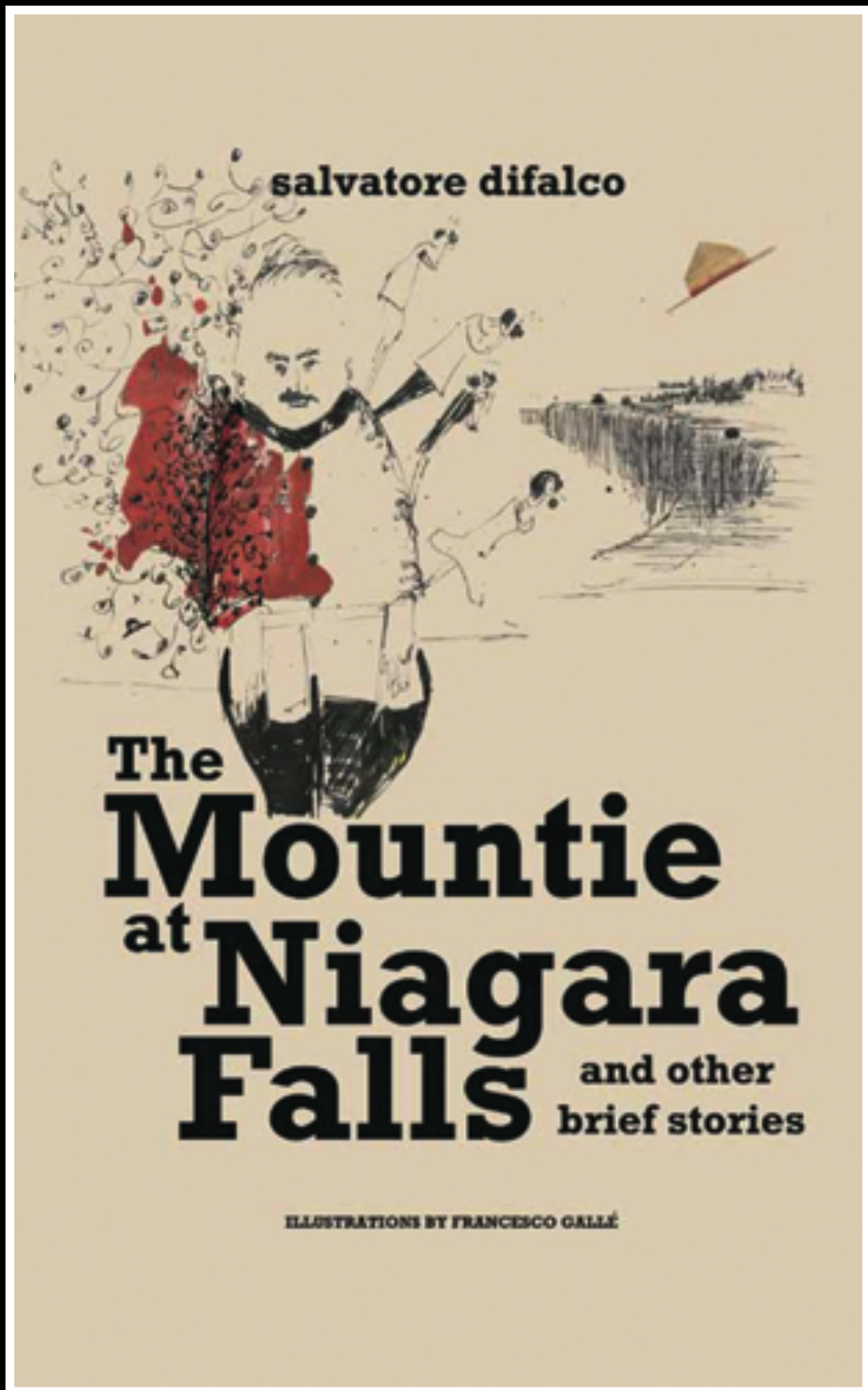
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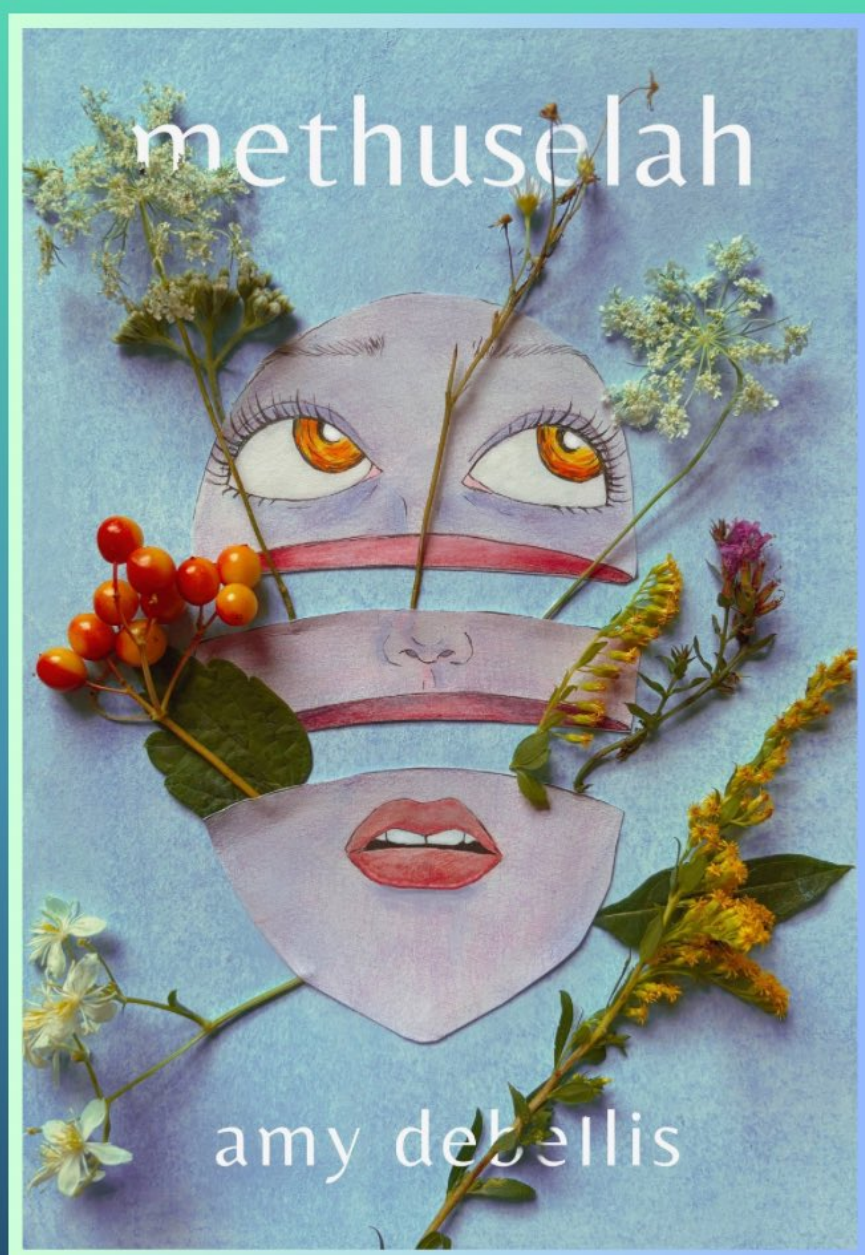
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