



Andrew and Donora A.  
Rihn

The Marriage of Heaven  
and Hell: An Election Cycle

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An Election Cycle

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Locofo Chaps is an imprint of Moria Books.  
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Locofo Chaps is dedicated to publishing politically-oriented poetry.

Chicago, USA, 2017

*If you live through this with me  
I swear that I would die for you*

Pastoral

We got married the day before the election.

My husband and I, newly minted  
monogamists, stood with eyes welled  
before the judge. I wore a black

lace dress and new shoes. He,  
a student of the protests, strapped  
pop cans to the back of his Jeep.

Some months before, we had moved  
into a tiny house near a lake,  
and learned our neighbor two doors

down keeps five Confederate flags  
flying at all times. One night, walking  
the dogs, we passed another house

with its upstairs window open. I saw a  
woman undressing in front of another flag.  
I almost did not tell my husband.

The night after the election,  
I lie in bed with a migraine,  
the worst I've had in nearly a year.

I go to take a shower, our bathroom  
the size of a closet, and turn the  
water on as hot as I can stand it.

## Benediction

What it felt like: to be  
the definition of a word  
you could not translate.

Storm clouds had  
obscured the night sky  
for some time.

And yes, I ran screaming  
into that night  
like a myth gone mad

while lightning pealed  
in your eyes, those  
glowing filaments of imagination.

We had broken into  
this bonfire feet first.

I didn't even know  
the meaning of risk  
until you laid hands upon me,  
bandaging my scars and  
soothing my ragged tongue.

You never gave up,  
the copper penny in my fusebox,  
and there will never  
be language enough  
to thank you.

## Les Témoins

When we fell in love, you said  
I had changed the composition  
of the sky. Now we sit  
side by side in our booth  
at Denny's, newly married, watching  
election results tally like sins  
while our coffee grows cold.

A week before, I was on  
a treadmill, watching a news story  
about the kilogram. A precious lump  
of metal, locked in a Parisian safe  
beneath three glass bell jars,  
has become unreliable.  
Scientists, we are assured, are working  
to redefine the weight of the world.

Together, we bear witness  
to this news. An old Greek man  
calls to us from two booths back.  
*Witness*, he says. In Greek,  
the word *witness* means *martyr*.

We watch this origami world unfold.  
If the kilogram can shed its weight,  
we can live through this.

## A Becoming

I was a wheel greased with my own blood,  
a bad metaphor for wanting.

You, all black: hair, eyes, mouth. You lit a fire,  
and I never forgave you for it.

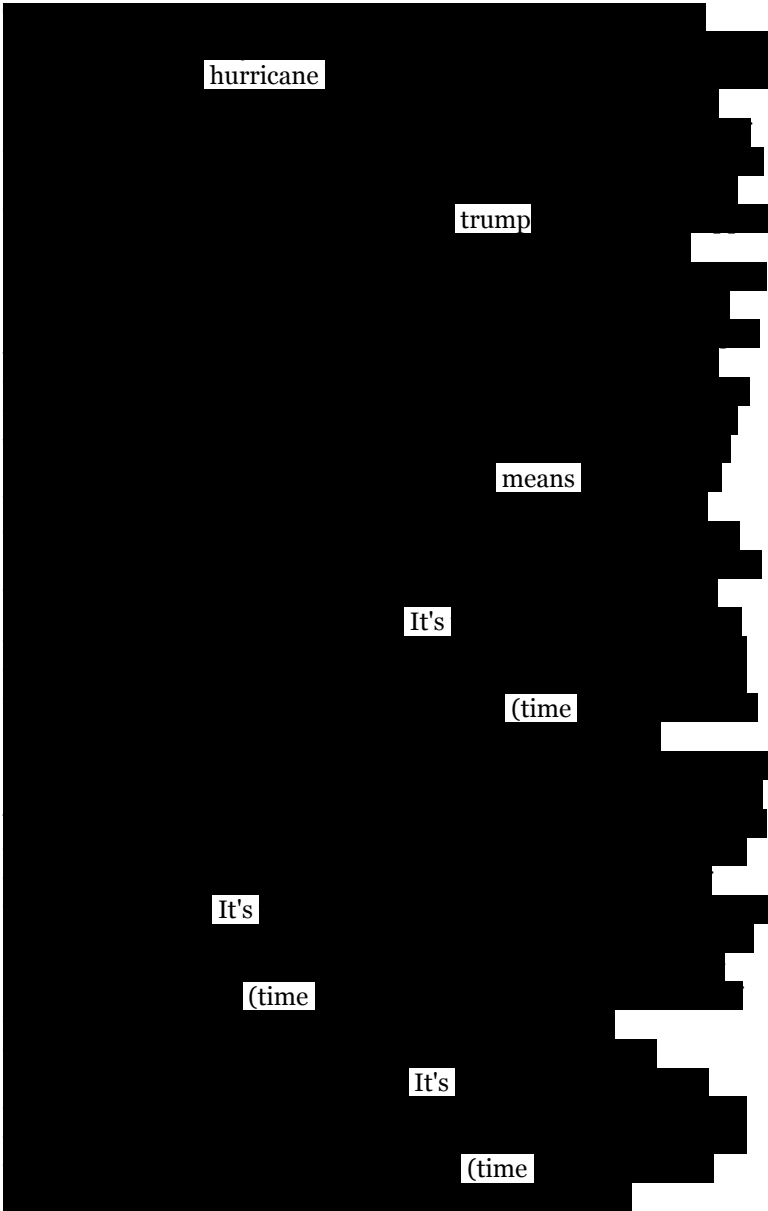
I forgive you for it. I knew you  
before you picked ashes out of your own

arm; I would have been at your  
birth to tell your mother her son would bring

the world's shudder to itself. We never know  
what goes on, do we, but this:

I love you now like so much blue fire, and  
we will live here. We will live here.





## Acknowledgments

Title: *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* by William Blake

Epigraph: "Asking for It" by Hole (with Kurt Cobain)

Erasure: "It's the End of the World as We Know It (And I Feel Fine)" by R.E.M.

Andrew and Donora A. Rihn work in both poetry and rhetoric and composition. They live in the northeastern part of Ohio, a currently red state, near the Portage Lakes with their two rescue dogs.

## Locofo Chaps

2017

Eileen Tabios – *To Be An Empire Is To Burn*  
Charles Perrone – *A CAPacious Act*  
Francesco Levato – *A Continuum of Force*  
Joel Chace – *America's Tin*  
John Goodman – *Twenty Moments that Changed the World*  
Donna Kuhn – *Don't Say His Name*  
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Gabriel Gudding – *Bed From Government*  
mIEKAL aND – *Manifesto of the Moment*  
Garin Cycholl – *Country Musics 20/20*  
Mary Kasimor – *The Prometheus Collage*  
lars palm – *case*  
Reijo Valta – *Truth and Truthmp*  
Andrew Peterson – *The Big Game is Every Night*  
Romeo Alcala Cruz – *Archaeoteryx*  
John Lowther – *18 of 555*  
Jorge Sánchez – *Now Sing*  
Alex Gildzen – *Disco Naps & Odd Nods*  
Barbara Janes Reyes – *Puñeta: Political Pilipinx Poetry, vol. 2*  
Luisa A. Igloria – *Puñeta: Political Pilipinx Poetry, vol. 3*  
Tom Bamford – *The Gag Reel*  
Melinda Luisa de Jesús – *Humpty Drumpfty and Other Poems*  
Allen Bramhall – *Bleak Like Me*  
Kristian Carlsson – *The United World of War*  
Roy Bentley – *Men, Death, Lies*  
Travis Macdonald – *How to Zing the Government*  
Kristian Carlsson – *Dhaka Poems*  
Barbara Jane Reyes – *Nevertheless, #She Persisted*  
Martha Deed – *We Should Have Seen This Coming*  
Matt Hill – *Yet Another Blunted Ascent*  
Patricia Roth Schwartz – *Know Better*  
Melinda Luisa de Jesús – *Petty Poetry for SCROTUS' Girls, with poems for Elizabeth Warren and Michelle Obama*  
Freke Räihä – *Explanation model for 'Virus'*  
Eileen R. Tabios – *Immigrant*  
Ronald Mars Lintz – *Orange Crust & Light*

John Bloomberg-Rissman – *In These Days of Rage*  
Colin Dardis – *Post-Truth Blues*  
Leah Mueller – *Political Apnea*  
Naomi Buck Palagi – *Imagine Renaissance*  
John Bloomberg-Rissman and Eileen Tabios – *Comprehending  
Mortality*  
Dan Ryan – *Swamp Tales*  
Sheri Reda – *Stubborn*  
Christine Stoddard — *Chica/Mujer*  
Aileen Ibardaloza, Paul Cassinetta, and Wesley St. Jo – *No Names*  
Nicholas Michael Ravnika – *Liberal elite media rag. SAD!*  
Mark Young – *The Waitstaff of Mar-a-Largo*  
Howard Yosha – *Stop Armageddon*  
Andrew and Donora Rihn – *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*  
Reshmi Dutt-Ballerstadt – *Extreme Vetting*  
Michael Dickel – *Breakfast at the End of Capitalism*  
Tom Hibbard – *Poems of Innocence and Guilt*  
Eileen Tabios (ed.) – *Menopausal Hay(na)ku  
For P-Grubbers*  
Aileen Casinetta – *Tweet*  
Melinda Luisa de Jesús – *Defying Trumplandia*  
Carol Dorf – *Some Years Ask*  
Andrew and Donora A. Rihn – *The Marriage of Heaven  
and Hell*

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