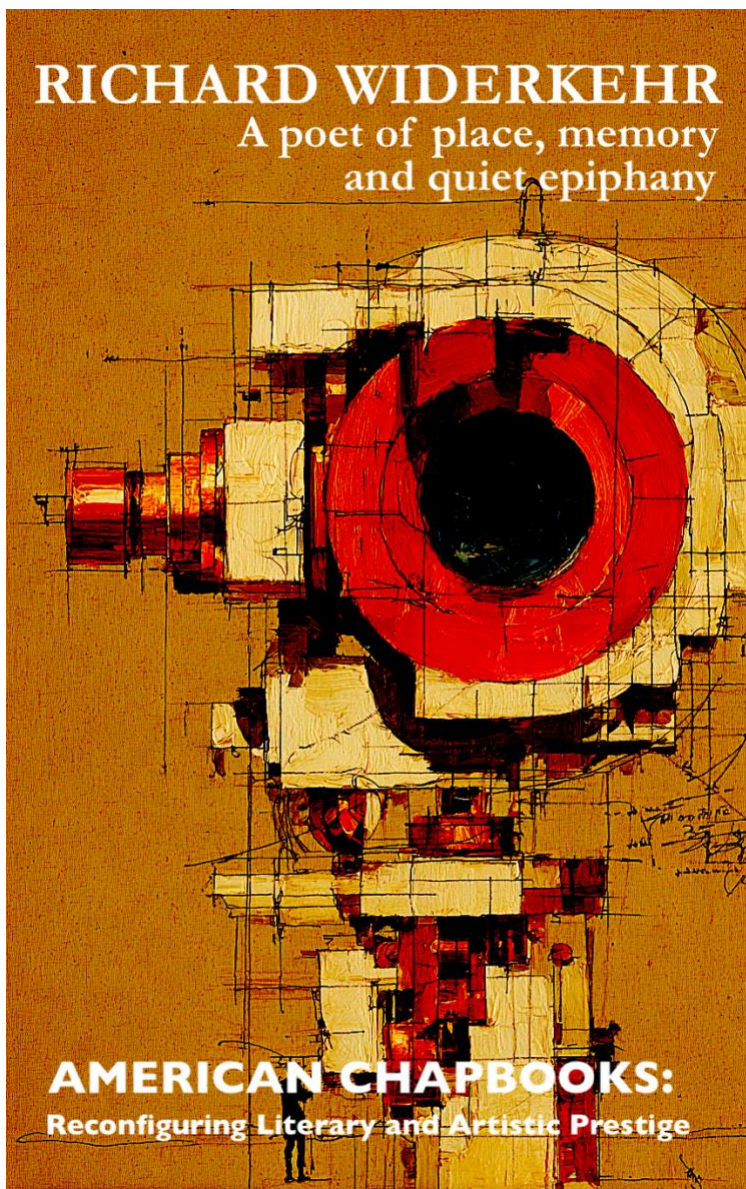

Issues of Contemporary Aesthetics
PAMPHLET SERIES

RICHARD WIDERKEHR

A poet of place, memory
and quiet epiphany



AMERICAN CHAPBOOKS:

Reconfiguring Literary and Artistic Prestige

HAL: Heuristic Algorithmic Library
An Imprint of OJAL Art Incorporated

RICHARD WIDERKEHR:
A Poet Of Place, Memory, and Quiet Epiphany

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THE AMERICAN PAMPHLET:
Reconfiguring Literary Prestige

RICHARD WIDERKEHR: A POET OF PLACE, MEMORY, AND QUIET EPIPHANY

Richard Widerkehr's fifth book of poems, Missing the Owl, is available from Shanti Arts Publications. He has also published three chapbooks and one novel, Sedimental Journey (Tarragon Books). His work has appeared in Open: A Journal of Arts & Letters (O:J&L), Writer's Almanac, Atlanta Review, Midwest Review, and many others. He won two Hopwood first prizes for poetry at the University of Michigan, three Sue C. Boynton awards, three prizes at The Bridge, and first prize for a short story at the Pacific Northwest Writers Conference. He is also a musician and singer.

INTRODUCTION

Richard Widerkehr's poetry, as featured in *OPEN: Journal of Arts & Letters* (O:J&L) and its Buttonhook Press imprint, stands out for its lyrical observation and narrative Americana, often rooted in the landscapes of the Pacific Northwest. His work explores themes of landscape, memory, and loss, and is presented in various poetic forms, including special pamphlet editions such as the chapbook *Potter's Valley Road*.

MASTER OF THE QUIET NARRATIVE

Widerkehr excels at finding the profound within the everyday. Rather than relying on avant-garde techniques, he employs clear, accessible lyricism to delve into complex emotional states. His poetry is marked by restraint—what might seem like a simple observation, such as the curve of a road in *Potter's Valley Road*, becomes a powerful metaphor for the trajectory of a life or relationship. This understated approach offers readers a bridge to contemporary poetry, making it accessible while retaining intellectual and emotional depth.

LANDSCAPE AS A MIRROR FOR THE PSYCHE

The Pacific Northwest and rural Americana are not mere backdrops in Widerkehr's work; they serve as mirrors for the human psyche. He skillfully maps grief and loss onto the landscape, showing how nature—often weathered and indifferent—echoes the human struggle to endure. His poetry frequently explores absence, whether it be lost friends, bygone eras, or fading memories, and documents how people fill these voids with stories, effectively chronicling the "ghosts" that inhabit our daily lives.

STRUCTURAL VERSATILITY

Widerkehr's technical range is evident in the O:JA&L "Americana" series. He moves fluidly between traditional forms and conversational free verse, prioritizing the integrity of the subject matter over adherence to a single style. By focusing on the pamphlet format, such as those published by Buttonhook Press, he emphasizes the importance of poetic sequences—poems that converse with one another to build a larger narrative world.

COMPARATIVE CONTEXT

A closer look at Widerkehr's approach reveals several defining aspects:

ASPECT	APPROACH	IMPACT ON READER
TONE	Melancholic but resilient	Offers companionship in solitude
IMAGERY	Tactile (wood, rain, gravel, labor)	Grounds the abstract soul in the concrete world
PERSPECTIVE	The "long view" of an elder observer	Provides wisdom on aging, continuity, and time

This comparative context highlights how Widerkehr's poetry provides a sense of comforting companionship, grounds abstract emotions in tangible imagery, and offers a sensitive perspective on the passage of time.

SUMMARY OF IMPORTANCE

Richard Widerkehr is a vital voice in contemporary Americana poetry. He preserves the narrative tradition while infusing it with psychological depth, reminding us that ordinary life is worthy of high art. His work meticulously chronicles how we live in a world that is constantly changing yet is defined by enduring patterns of love and loss.

CONCLUSION

Through his work in *OPEN: Journal of Arts & Letters* (O:JA&L) and Buttonhook Press, Richard Widerkehr bridges the physical landscape and psychological interior, offering readers a grounded yet deeply resonant poetic experience. His poetry invites us to reflect on our own connections to place, memory, and the quiet moments that shape our lives.

RICHARD WIDERKEHR:
A Poet Of Place, Memory, and Quiet Epiphany

BUTTONHOOK PRESS PAMPHLET SERIES

2020

Safe Spaces: A Pretty Lie

Editorials on Issues of Poetic Practice by Rachel Custer

Against Art as a Radical Subjectivity

Editorials on Issues of Poetic Practice by Rachel Custer

Songs on the Way to God: A Theory of Poetics

Editorials on Issues of Poetic Practice by Rachel Custer

The Artistic Power of Silence: On Letting Art Speak for Itself

Editorials on Issues of Poetic Practice by Rachel Custer

Special Edition: Experimental Discourse

...are serious offenses, and...

A closet drama in two acts by Anthony Hamilton

How to Love a Headstone

Poetry by Sloane Asakura

The Last of the Gallants

Poetry by Atar Hadari

2021

Salt

Poetry by Amanda Leal

Deer in Fog at Twilight Near Squalicum Lake Road

Poetry by Richard Widerkehr

Democracy has Lifted Up Its Voice

Poetry by Mike Puican

2YC Review: The Works

Poetry and prose by members of the Two-Year College Caucus at AWP

Promises

Poetry by Ellis Elliott

Home

Poetry by Amanda Leal

Study of Burkas

A poem by Dana Sonnenschein

The Open Window

Flash vignettes by O.G. Rose

Light in the Cathedral: Russian/English Poems

Poetry in two languages by Andrey Gritsman

2022

Poems for Families

Poetry by Kirby Olson

RICHARD WIDERKEHR:
A Poet Of Place, Memory, and Quiet Epiphany

Mogollon Rim

Poetry by Allisa Cherry

Hanno

Poetry by John-Michael Bloomquist

Poem scrawled on a maize-sheaf for her (last offering)

Poetry and art by Arturo Desimone

The Curve of the Open Page

A poem by Bruce Bond

Murder in the House: The "Nutshells" of Frances Glessner Lee

Poetry by Jessica Purdy

War and Riff

Haibun by Keith Polette

Family Photo of America

Poetry by Lynn Potts

Chester River Reverie

Poetry by Priscilla Long

Salton Sea

A short story by Mike Murray

The Fiddler

Poetry by Tim Hunt

A Balloon Called Young America

Poetry by Jennifer Clark

High Fashion

Featured Collaboration

Poetry by Adjei Agyei-Baah & Fine Art Photography by Jerome Berglund

2023

Rain Comes to the Central Valley

Poetry by Adrienne Pilon

DECIDUOUS

Poetry by Jean Kane

Potter's Valley Road

Poetry (Americana) by Richard Widerkehr

Old Barn or How Things Go On

Poetry by Penelope Schotte

Nothing To Be Sorry For

Poetry by Lynn Cohen

Small Lantern

Featured Haiga Collaborations

Haiku: Hassane Zemmouri and Photography: Megali Bretou & Bea Bauer

A Sport and a Pastime

Haiku (Americana) by Ron Scully

RICHARD WIDERKEHR:
A Poet Of Place, Memory, and Quiet Epiphany

Night Train

Haiku by Jerome Gagnon

The Aquarian Foundation

Poetry (Americana) by Jeffrey Gray

Once There Was a Way

Poetry by Steve Myers

Local Habitations

Poetry by Edison Jennings

Occasions for Listening (Excerpts from a WIP)

Spencer Silverthorne

2024

Needful Things

Micropoems by Ronald J. Scully (Americana)

Designation

Poetry by Wendy Taylor Carlisle

California Summer

Poetry by Michael Lee Johnson

Once Is Enough

Formalist poems by Peter Austin (Americana)

Garden

Poems by Jianqing Zheng (Americana)

Let Me Say This Up Front

Poetry by David James (Americana)

GEMS

Poems by Larry D. Thomas

BESTIARY

Poems by Larry D. Thomas

2025

WEST Toward Squalicum Mountain

Poems by Richard Weiderkehr

Mississippi River Delta: A Bestiary

Poems by Larry D. Thomas

A Week Late...

Haibun & Tanka Prose by Carolyn Martin



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RICHARD WIDERKEHR:
A Poet Of Place, Memory, and Quiet Epiphany

HOT BUTTON PRESS *Contemporary Issues*

2023

Lamentations: Icons of War

Arab-Israeli Conflict image-as-poem collection by Tony Brinkley

In Praise of Columbus

Poetry by Kirby Olson

Perseus with the Head of Medusa

Editorials on Issues of Contemporary Aesthetics by Contributing Editor
Mick McGrath

Democrats by Trippin'

Editorials on Issues of Contemporary Aesthetics by Contributing Editor
Mick McGrath

Let's Talk About Female Academics

Editorials on Issues of Contemporary Aesthetics by Contributing Editor
Mick McGrath

Diversophiles Everywhere!

Editorials on Issues of Contemporary Aesthetics by Contributing Editor
Mike McGrath

The End of the "Black Victim" Narrative?

Editorials on Issues of Contemporary Aesthetics by Contributing Editor
Mick McGrath

2024

Woes Innumerable (HOT BUTTON PRESS)

Based Fiction Mick McGrath (Americana)

2025

The Future Is Mao! (HOT BUTTON PRESS)

Short Fiction by Mick McGrath

Musing the Crossroads(HOT BUTTON PRESS)

Poems by Larry D. Thomas

SUPERFLUOUS SUPER LOUIS (HOT BUTTON PRESS)

Winner of the 2025 WEITZ PRIZE for Counter-Revolution Writing
Short Story by Perry Genovesi

Rule & Innovation (HOT BUTTON PRESS)

Short Fiction by Mick McGrath

THE AMERICAN PAMPHLET:
Reconfiguring Literary Prestige

RICHARD WIDERKEHR:
A Poet Of Place, Memory, and Quiet Epiphany

DALLY POST PRESS: *Cowboy Poetry*

2025

Manhunt in Mossy Creek

Traditional Ballad by Doug Stoiber



DALLY POST PRESS

An imprint of OPEN: Journal of Arts & Letters

FIREFIGHT PRESS: *Trench Art*

2025

ODE TO A GUNNER'S MATE

Poem by LT. Kalireyna Streeby

OPEN: Journal of Arts & Letters
EXPERIENCE / REFLECT / CELEBRATE



FIREFIGHT PRESS:
Trench Art Series

HAL: *Heuristic Algorithmic Library*
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RICHARD WIDERKEHR:
A Poet Of Place, Memory, and Quiet Epiphany

AVAILABLE NOW FROM O:JA&L'S BUTTONHOOK PRESS

FLASH FICTION: Alive in the Flicker *A Portable Workshop*

PAMELYN CASTO

“Pamelyn Casto’s *Flash Fiction: Alive in the Flicker* is insightful, comprehensive, and brimming with inventive prompts and exercises to make your flash truly leap off the page.”

~ Dinty W. Moore

co-editor of the *Best of Brevity: Twenty Groundbreaking Years of Flash Nonfiction*

“Pamelyn Casto has been the most useful person in flash for years. This “portable workshop” proves it. *Flash Fiction: Alive in the Flicker* is an amazing flash compendium of everything for anyone who is interested the form. It’s also a writers’ workshop from prompts to where to send flashes. What’s not to like?”

~ Robert Shapard

co-editor of many Flash and Sudden Fiction anthologies, the latest are *Sudden Fiction Latina: Short Stories from the United States and Latin America* (2010) and *Flash Fiction International: Very Short Stories from Around the World* (2015)

“Pamelyn Casto’s valuable book *Flash Fiction: Alive in the Flicker* is an astonishing illumination—a total history of the form with essays, strategies and exercises; lessons, examples, how-to’s, markets, marketing, contests, anthologies, prompts, advice from pros, new directions (flash film!), reader psychology even—it is all here, with hundreds of internet links. There will never be a fuller single resource, with a good teacher’s encouraging tone about it, to boot. You can say flash fiction begins with Aesop; with Casto you can begin anew.

~Kent H. Dixon

translator of *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (2018) and co-editor of *Stone Wall Book of Short Fictions* (1976)

THE AMERICAN PAMPHLET:
Reconfiguring Literary Prestige

RICHARD WIDERKEHR:

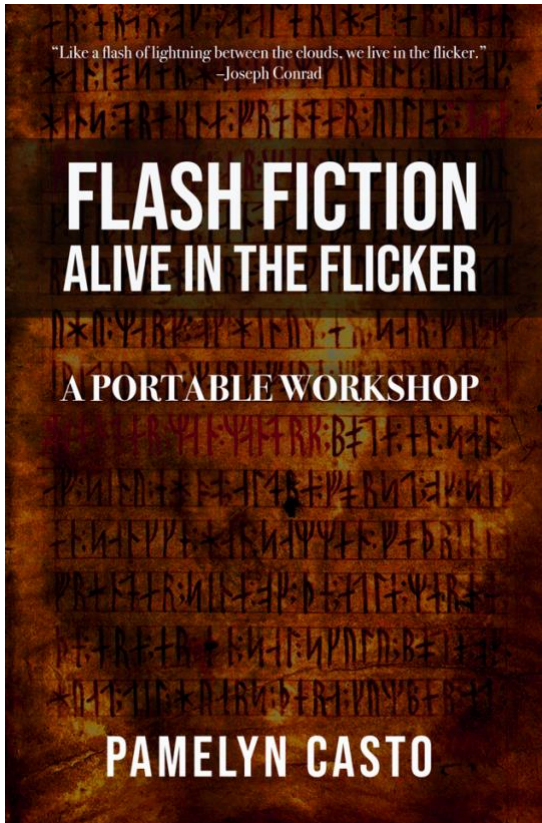
A Poet Of Place, Memory, and Quiet Epiphany

"Pamelyn Casto is a deep font of flash knowledge, and this portable workshop is a thorough, indispensable resource for writers and instructors who want to know more about what this thing called "flash" is, how to write it, and more important, how to read and understand it."

~ Tara Lynn Masih

editor of *The Rose Metal Press Field Guide to Writing Flash Fiction* (2009)
and founder of *The Best Small Fictions* (founded 2015)

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AMAZON REVIEWS

for Pamelyn Castos's *FLASH FICTION: Alive in the Flicker*

Daniel J. Nicholas

Reviewed in the United States on August 26, 2024

Verified Purchase

If I were to teach a class, this book would be required reading or a course outline for discussion. Bravo, Pamelyn! In addition, I look forward to your monthly blog to start up again.

David Lignell

Reviewed in the United States on November 23, 2022

Verified Purchase

Pamela Casto's new text, *Flash Fiction: Alive in the Flicker*, is a must have "portable workshop" workbook for anyone who desires to learn and practice the many forms of flash fiction.

W.R. Rodriguez

Reviewed in the United States on October 5, 2022

Verified Purchase

An authoritative overview of the genre, combined with practical advice on the writing process and an abundance of writing prompts.

Norman Jensen

Reviewed in the United States on April 2, 2024

Reading is great but hands-on prompts are even better.



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