

# House of Water

Matthew Nienow



Publication Date: October 2016

Distribution: North America

Barcode: Yes

ISBN: 978-1-938584-64-0

Price: \$15.95

Pages: 100

Available From: Consortium Book Sales & Distribution

## Praise for House of Water:

“Matthew Nienow understands the spell-like power of calling things by their ancient, actual names: nubbins and sapwood, preachers and riving knives, lapstrake and bulwarks and sponsons. *House of Water* is a marvelous debut, full of love songs to work, to struggle, and to all that is plumb, and level, and true.”

—Patrick Phillips

This debut highlights fatherhood at its peak as it juggles the uncertainty and deeper meaning of everyday life. The hesitant, yet curious voice of the poems are deeply entrenched in the familial, yet also refreshingly open about the crush one feels when their ideals crash down. How does one build a life, only to be redirected and start anew?

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## A poem from House of Water:

### I Have No Empire

to offer you,  
my son, only the song

a fool travels with, on the back  
of the wrong thought.

Forego the knife  
in the pocket for a stone.

The only protection  
from the inevitable

is patience. What better  
teacher than stone?

Carry the weight well  
and you'll hardly notice

how much the road  
agrees with each step.

Son, the world erupts  
and so grows.

When it cools,  
and trust me, it does,

the crust is a tomb to living,  
though the dead call it womb.



Matthew Nienow lives in Port Townsend, Washington with his wife and two sons, where he builds boats and custom wooden paddle boards. His poems have appeared in Best New Poets (2007 and 2012), New England Review and Poetry, which awarded him a 2013 Ruth Lilly Poetry Fellowship. He has also received fellowships, grants and support from the National Endowment for the Arts (2011 Fellowship), the Elizabeth George Foundation, Artist Trust of Washington State, the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference and 4Culture of Seattle.

## Publicity and Events

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