For immediate release February 15, 2015

Timeless Greek drama inspires poet’s fourth collection

PITTSBURGH—Prize-winning poet Quan Barry said the poems in her new collection *Loose Strife* were initially inspired by Aeschylus’ fifth-century B.C. trilogy “The Oresteia,” which chronicles the fall of the House of Atreides. “*Loose Strife* investigates the classical sense of loose strife, namely ‘to loose battle’ or ‘sow chaos,’ a concept which is still very much with us more than twenty-five hundred years later,” she explained.

Most of the poems in the collection bear the title “loose strife,” followed by a phrase in parentheses to artfully distinguish one from another. Barry’s poems are set on the page using a vast array of shapes, sizes, line spacings and margins; there is even a poem in which some of the text appears to have been redacted, obscured by the thick black bars one associates with classified government documents.

Barry, professor of English at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and director of the MFA program in creative writing, is the author of three other poetry collections. They include: *Asylum*, winner of UPP’s Agnes Lynch Starrett Poetry Prize; *Controvertibles*; and *Water Puppets*, winner of the Donald Hall Prize in Poetry.

*Tri-Quarterly* had this praise for *Water Puppets*: “The vocabulary [Barry] employs . . . is stark and stunning, a victory against these brutal themes. There can be no denial: the winner of the 2010 Donald Hall Prize is a demanding, worthwhile read.” *The Iowa Review* said Barry “forces us to remember what we don’t want to see, to hold our inhumanity up against the ‘shards of beauty’ in the world, so that we may not forget what it is that gives our lives meaning.”

Barry is the recipient of fellowships from Stanford University, the Wisconsin Institute for Creative Writing, the Wisconsin Arts Board, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

The Madison, Wisconsin, resident was born in Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City), and raised on Boston’s north shore. Her debut novel *She Weeps Each Time You’re Born* (Random House, 2015) is set amid the tumultuous history of modern Vietnam as experienced by a young girl born under mysterious circumstances a few years before reunification—and with the ability to hear the voices of the dead.

# # #

*Loose Strife*, poems by Quan Barry, is published by the University of Pittsburgh Press.

72 pp. · 6 x 9 · ISBN 978-0-8229-6329-5 · Paper $15.95 · eBook available