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Starrett winner's collection tells of the journey to 'loving companionship'

PITTSBURGH—Minneapolis poet Dore Kiesselbach described his new collection *Salt Pier* as "a hypothesis about the capacity of language to gain traction on experience in such a way that memory blossoms and judgment is made whole."

Salt Pier is the winner of the 2011 Agnes Lynch Starrett Poetry Prize—one of America's most distinguished awards for a first book of poetry—from the University of Pittsburgh Press.

"As ultimately a love story, *Salt Pier* is structurally perhaps a throwback to an earlier time," Kiesselbach explained. "All the while trying to find its bearings in the 'natural' world, it follows an initially profoundly-alienated and self-alienated speaker along a developmental arc that begins in childhood and ends in a hypothetical present. There, a negotiated compromise with history allows him to finally know loving companionship."

Poet Thomas Lux has long been a fan of Kiesselbach. "I have followed, with pleasure, Dore Kiesselbach's sinuous poems for several years," he said. "Some of them remind me of pythons wrapped around a tree limb above a riverbank. Those make me nervous. Others remind me of a favorite shirt, a shirt one will never relinquish, never. His poems, each one a tiny defibrillator, are a wonder."

A native of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, Kiesselbach was raised in California. He earned his B.A. in English and Creative Writing at Oberlin College. He received his M.F.A. in English from the University of Iowa (Writers' Workshop), where he held a U.S. Department of Education Javits fellowship. He has published widely, in magazines such as the *Antioch Review*, *Field*, *New Letters*, *Boulevard*, *Malahat Review* and *Poetry*.

In 2009, Kiesselbach won Britain's Bridport Prize for his poem "Non-invasive," which is included in *Salt Pier*, and was a finalist for the Starrett. An avid "backyardist," he lives in Minneapolis, Minnesota, with his wife, the master gardener Karin Ciano.

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