

Hi, I'm Marieke Van Der Steenhoven, the Special Collections Education and Outreach Librarian at the Bowdoin College Library.

Over the past few years, I've had the pleasure to contribute to two poetry books published by Littoral Books. Littoral Books is an independent press based in Portland, Maine committed to publishing beautiful books in a variety of genres by writers and artists from Maine and New England. Founded in 1975 by members of the Portland Women's Group for the express purpose of publishing the work of women writers, Littoral Books was one of the founding presses of the main Writers and Publishers Alliance. "Balancing Act" was one of the press's early publications and featured work by main women poets, including the work of now Governor Janet Mills.

The press went into hibernation in 1976, but 42 years later in 2018 it renewed publication with Agnes Bushell's novel "The House on Perry Street" and "Balancing Act 2," a new anthology of Maine women writers. Agnes and Jim Bushell of Littoral Books are family friends, and when they asked me to conduct oral histories with poets, Jacqueline Moore and Kate Hagopian Berry for inclusion in their forthcoming books, I was thrilled by the opportunity to sit down with these incredible women writers to talk to them about their lives, their work, and the inspiration.

Today I'm going to read from Jacqueline Moore's book of poetry, "Chasing the Grass," which Littoral Books released in 2019. I had the honor to sit down with Jackie who was in her mid 90s to discuss her incredible life, including taking classes with Seamus Heaney at Harvard, living off the grid in mid-coast Maine and eco poetry.

This book is unofficially dedicated to Greta Thunberg.

Entanglement.

I am the white plastic deli bag you tossed into a subway grate, rising on an up raft. I twirl my girlish way along the avenues, perch on that Linden tree outside your window, I am your high branch entanglement with soul. Your will-o'-the-wisp out of reach. Snug my tree crotch, I sag and shrivel and yellow in your sight forever.

Nothing More Black.

Nothing more black than a shadow with a voice hissing, 'murder most foul was witnessed here.' Cut down in its prime, a primeval oak was limbed, bucked, and hauled to the mill. Roots still thrust for their watery salts. Still dream of that first seed dropped from crossbills. Nothing pardons murder, not even for newsprint, nothing more black than a shadow with a voice.

And finally,

News From A Small Organic Farm for Alice Waters.

If the west wind sings our arugula answers back with odes to the good earth. If our arugula withers, we comfort each plant with the warm teas of basil. If they are sick at

heart, we feed them bird droppings from the eaves of our farmhouse. Eat our mesclun,
embrace the ephemeral.

These were poems from "Chasing the Grass" by Jacqueline Moore and published by Littoral
Books in 2019.

Thanks for listening.

Transcript by [Rev.com](https://www.rev.com)