

her need to hold on to the past: "You are gone, but I am finding myself again ... I have come back to myself, and with myself, I will fight to carry on."

*Prima Vera*  
Jill Tomasetti  
Drop Leaf Press  
2015

Paige Melin

In the Orphic tradition, there is a strong belief that human and nature were once and will be again one and the same, that each being in the universe is a part of a whole, that, in the words of Kaja Silverman, "everything derives from the same flesh." This interconnectedness is central in Jill Tomasetti's *PRIMA VERA*, a collection which focuses on the chasm between the human and the natural world and our primal longing to mend it, our "trying to get past ourselves and into it." The speaker's own desire to be in closer commune with nature is manifest throughout. She asks of a plant shoot, "give me words / teach me your language," and, later, she regrets the lack of that language: "i don't know what to say / i bought these seeds from the store / i can't make even one of you." The desire for interconnectedness is met with the frustration of separation, as well as the constant human impulse to impose and the capitalist drive to produce; the speaker recognizes her own medium of conveyance as a form of obstruction:

submerge *this*

dissolve the smooth paper

so the twilight sounds are left  
to talk to each other

Yet even as human language and forms (the book-object) act in themselves as barriers to the natural world, poetry, the speaker recognizes, also has the potential to breach the chasm: "we burrow / into the theme / biting juicy bulbs of / new language." And though the speaker manipulates nature to make a point, her willingness to abandon herself to "unknowing," to a negative capability, keeps her from imposing on the natural world and instead puts her in a sort of tandem with it. *PRIMA VERA* is an evocative collection, filled with yearning, quiet contemplation, defeat, and hope.

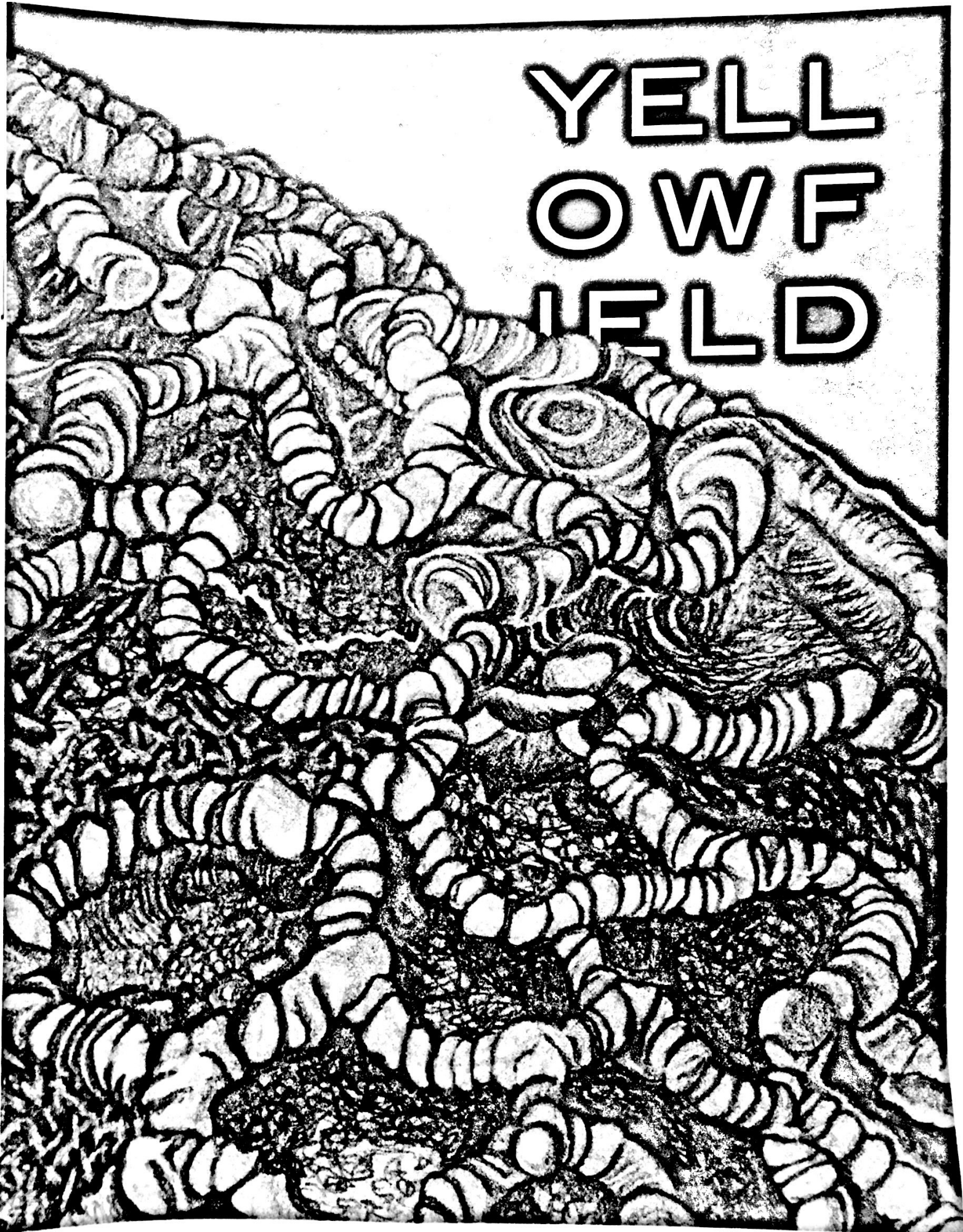
Paige Melin

*A Liquid Bird Inside The Night*  
Alexandra van de Kamp  
Red Glass Books  
2015

Alexandra van de Kamp's *A Liquid Bird Inside The Night* offers "a rain of hums" ("Nightgowns") amidst "an ocean of sound" ("How to Survive Yourself in Nine Steps"). In these poems, words as stillicide fall into a vast sea of dreams and movie scenes. Music propels the reader through van de Kamp's dream-like world. In the poem "Sleep: An Update", van de Kamp writes, "Teeth dream their way / through the language they are forced to chew." Echoing Berryman's *Dream Songs*, van de Kamp utilizes the logic of dreams as a means of carrying back clarity from the other world of sleep. As the poem "The Swill of Sleep" announces, van de Kamp believes:

When we sleep, we tip over

# YELL OWF IELD



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