



Frank Paino

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While [Andrew McFadyen-Ketchum](#)'s second book, *Visiting Hours*, was haunted by the ghost of his dear friend, Mary Interlandi, who died by suicide, this newest volume, *Fight or Flight* (<https://www.tamupress.com/.../9781622889433/fight-or-flight/>) haunts readers with a beautiful resilience that transmutes the poet's emotional pain following a divorce into a psalm in praise of life despite its difficulties. With the insight of a philosopher, and the keen ear of a markedly-skilled poet, McFadyen-Ketchum writes poems that truly matter. Everything is at stake here... life, love, family... but despite the risks inherent in exposing his heart again, he does precisely that, and to glorious effect.

At its core, *Fight or Flight* throws down a gauntlet: do we embrace this life, warts and all, or do we flee? The poet's choice is clearly the former.

This is a book you'll want to savor, a kind of bedside reader you may turn to before retiring each night, so that your dreams might enter the world on offer more profoundly as you sleep.

Though I could choose a host of poems by way of introduction, I'm electing to go with one of the volume's shorter pieces. I admire it precisely for its delicious brevity. For its control. For its bravery, and, ultimately, its triumph. To my mind, it's a summary of the book's message.

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 Stand with Ukraine 

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### Want

A wind descended from the west  
To rattle the orchard trees. Placards  
Shaped like dogtags or thumbs  
Lashed to apples and plums  
Rang out as though wine flutes struck  
At the marriage table. Cluster after cluster of star-  
Tiny white blossoms let go their limbs  
And laid themselves  
Across the river—the gush of spring,  
The railing wind, the clanging of the trees  
So loud, not a soul could make out  
The nuthatches and cardinals battling  
The zephyrs and westerlies  
To take their place among the planets  
To throat their earth-bound song.

~*Andrew McFadyen-Ketchum*