



BEYOND EARTH'S EDGE

THE POETRY OF SPACEFLIGHT

EDITED BY JULIE SWARSTAD JOHNSON AND CHRISTOPHER COKINOS

INTRODUCTION BY JOHN M. LOGSDON

Poets have been to space—they travel there with words

Beyond Earth's Edge: The Poetry of Spaceflight is a trailblazing anthology of poetry that spans from the dawn of the space age to the imagined futures of the universe. The anthology offers a fascinating record of both national mindsets and private perspectives as poets grapple with the promise and peril of U.S. space exploration across decades and into the present. Tracing an arc of literary skepticism during the Apollo era and before to a more curious, and even hopeful, stance today, Beyond Earth's Edge includes diverse perspectives from poets such as Robert Hayden, Rae Armantrout, N. Scott Momaday, Adrienne Rich, Tracy K. Smith, Ray Bradbury, May Swenson, Pablo Neruda, and many other engaging poetic voices.

Beyond Earth's Edge vividly captures the violence of blastoff, the wonders seen by Hubble, and the trajectories of exploration to Mars and beyond through a wide array of lyric celebrations, somber meditations, accessible narratives, concrete poems, and new forms of science fiction. With the dawn of the New Space movement, continued interest in Mars, and renewed excitement about returning to the Moon, Beyond Earth's Edge is a giant leap toward bridging poetry and science.

JULIE SWARSTAD JOHNSON is the author of *Pennsylvania Furnace*, editor's choice selection for the Unicorn Press first book series, as well as the chapbooks *Orchard Light* and *Jumping the Pit*. She has served as artist in residence at Gettysburg National Military Park. She lives in Tucson and works at the University of Arizona Poetry Center.

CHRISTOPHER COKINOS is the author of three books of literary nonfiction: *Hope Is the Thing with Feathers: A Personal Chronicle of Vanished Birds*; *The Fallen Sky: An Intimate History of Shooting Stars*; and *Bodies, of the Holocene*. In 2016, the University of Arizona Press published his co-edited anthology, *The Sonoran Desert: A Literary Field Guide*, which won a Southwest Book of the Year award. Cokinos's poetry collection, *The Underneath*, was awarded the New American Press Poetry Prize. He lives in Tucson and is an associate professor at the University of Arizona.

"Only two of the contributors to this soaring, adroitly curated anthology have actually traveled in space, but nothing stops the rest of them from vaulting skyward on a pillar of words, with a potent gravity-assist from their emotions."

—Dava Sobel, author of *Galileo's Daughter* and *The Glass Universe: How the Ladies of the Harvard Observatory Took the Measure of the Stars*

"When math and prose won't move our leadership, we hope to nudge them with poetry and song. Delightful and inspiring—kudos to the editors. Now I am recharged and ready to go back to my drawing board. No coffee needed. Time to shape and tame and ride those sturdy steel fire-breathing dragons to take us to the Moon, Mars, and beyond. Oh, how I wish to touch and smell the pink snows on Titan. . . ."

—Madhu Thangavelu, University of Southern California

"Beyond Earth's Edge is an expansive anthology that takes on the topics of space, spaceflight, outer space, otherworldliness, and what it means to be inhabitants of Planet Earth imagining a world beyond. With an incredible aesthetic range and consistent sense of wonder, this anthology rekindles the imaginative power of poetry that both helps us see beyond ourselves and helps us see ourselves more clearly."

—Mathew Shenoda, author of *Somewhere Else*

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