These Terrible Sacraments

poems

Colleen S. Harris
FOR MY BROTHER, PATRICK

who lets me snip threads from his stories
and weave them into my own.
Thank you for sharing.
Thank you for coming home safe.
May battalions of angels stand over your dreams.
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“This Poem Takes Liberties”
“Language Lessons”
“Doubting Thomas”
“True Stories”

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“No Relation”

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These
Terrible
Sacraments
One:  *Proof of Passage*

And when he gets to Heaven,  
Saint Peter he will tell:  
One more Marine reporting, sir,  
I've spent my time in Hell.

—*excerpt from Marine Corps cadence call*
Proof of Passage

A dark expanse of desert, no lights, driving all the way back to the base in tarry night.

Once there, safe, breathing easy, someone (maybe Bobby) notices the taillight is lost.

You draw straws for who has to backtrack to find and erase proof of passage. In the end,

you all go, no man left behind, no man willing to wait in safety. And this, you tell me, is war,

brothers making their way together in the dark, searching for a light you are never allowed to use.
Lessons Learned

1

We learned not to speak of lost love, lost dignity, or lost souls. We learned quickly that complaining we had nothing left was inviting God to take a limb.

2

We learned to hoard packages of ramen, the difference between dull stripped rations and a feast. Peanut butter crackers were the next very best thing.

3

No man left behind. The fine print: 
*but we might lose your finger as we carry the rest of you out.*

4

We learned not to grow attached, and did it anyway. It was better than the neon danger of being forgotten, the safety net of memory.
5

We learned to be vigilant, listening for the flesh-soft *thunk* of pieces falling into hungry sand from the trucks we drove through hostile nights.

6

War is never really over. Rare steak bleeds like an animal, or a man, when you slice it open.

7

Some of us sleep with helmets on. It takes only one hit to ruin a perfectly serviceable skull.

The helmet won’t help, but we sleep better anyway.

8

It doesn’t matter how deep you dig in the desert. There are no green-glass bottles with messages, no moldering maps to guide you home.
Bedtime Story

There was a twelve-year old boy with sea-dark hair and light eyes who stood across the street, holding an AK-47. His thin arms absorbed the recoil well. He made a good lookout, never stood in the same doorway too long, never lit cigarettes after dark. He wore a jacket our lieutenant's son mailed from New York, for the boy who pulled his father to safety, Brentwood Indians sewn on the right breast in white thread over green wool. The lieutenant died of his wounds. The boy would not sell that warm coat even though he lived in the desert, even though he needed the bullets.
Roadside Pietà

No shroud dampens
the indignity. She is undone
when they lay him in her lap—
heavier than he was when alive,
as though his God replaced
his soul with a stone the size
of desire. She is unable
to lift him from the ground.
When I offer, she refuses.
She strokes his head as I imagine
she did when he was a quiet toddler
at sea in her skirts.
The coinsmell of blood,
the heavy amber note
of the sun on sand,
her brown hands against
the new white of his face.
Her husband makes tables.
The boy is a carpenter’s son.
I wonder if they will carve his name
and wait for him to walk again.
The old story reborn:
a fallen son, of woman as much as of God,
and only one of them has come
to carry the broken vessel home.
The Civilian Problem

Stampeding like mustangs through smoke and dust raining from the destroyed building, ragged stone stumbling blocks, not enough air to breathe and children complaining *American to help!* their parents lost in wrecked rock.

And the women, weeping, wailing, tugging our arms too close to our rifles, nails gouging their cheeks, howling names that sounded like curses, or charms. Bodies strewn everywhere. We could have searched for weeks and not found them all. The staff sergeant took pity on one ragged man, walking him to stable ground, making soothing noises, blocking the burned city from view. Startled eyes, not understanding the sound like wavewash, or cotton sheets whispering over skin, he barely heard the *insh’Allah* as the knife slipped in.
Chopper at Night

Spectral, ill-defined.
A woman's hair
again moonlit skies.
Black on black, like war.
This Poem Takes Liberties

with the truth. He was not thinking about how the IED sounded like God bellowing after stubbing a toe. He was not whispering his sister’s names aloud while still deaf from the blast. It is true that the shrapnel shredded the mail, including a letter from his mother in blue ink. But he was not thinking of family, or noise, or about how the mangled truckbed looked like a Lovecraftian ruin. This poem takes liberties because what ran through his head and stumbled out of his mouth was not a poem.

Oh Eddie oh shit oh God Eddie, the blood, what will I tell Myra, where is the rest of you Eddie?
Finding Beauty

The way tracers move, like stars kissed by gun muzzles and tossed out into dark seas. Even blood, the way it runs black at night, but jeweled under an unshaded sky. A lone fox beneath fawn-colored stone as the convoy grumbles past. Sometimes, we hold the supplies a little higher than we must, and the women have to raise their eyes to ours.
There Is A Land Where Cherries Are Dangerous

Where glowing tips of lazy cigarettes destroy night vision, become flares, invite rockets to dinner to gnaw on soldier bones.

Where virgins are prized more than breath, the gate to heaven between their thighs locked and barred by fathers and brothers bearing stones.

Where the magazine showing plump lips suckling sweet fruit will be confiscated because the woman on the page has half her chest and all her legs bare.
Look Closer

at the uniforms gathered for mail call. This guy gets a letter or three every time without fail, that guy gets none. This corporal has a mom who bakes like a battalion of angels ride beside us. We crowd her for a taste, but not of cookies (though we'll each get two). Look closer, see how we lean in, greedy for her to open the container so we can breathe some air from home.
Bored

Marines training at 29 Palms set each other on fire, duct tape unsuspecting buddies into the driver's side of Jeeps, leave them in desert heat with open cans of tuna fish for hours.
Conversation with the Dead Man to my Left

Don’t just lay there, B., come here, I’ll still call the medic. For me, man, come on, we can see daylight over that hill. Don’t just lay there. B., what am I going to say to your wife? She’ll call the medic for me after beating me silly, you know she will, don’t you just? Lay there, B., rest up, breathe, stay with me, man, until I call the medic. For me, man get up! I’m hit, three times, bullets hot angry bees. Don’t just lay there, B., call the medic for me!
No Relation

Most folks don’t know that the size of the coffin belched from the belly of the plane bears no relation to the size of the pieces of the body brought home. No matter how much your giblets weigh, or how much of you they save, you still get a full casket, twenty-one guns, and eight men to carry you to the grave.
Confession

I rolled him a little to the left, to shield my flank.
I put his mangled tags in my right boot against my ankle so if I made it, they’d know who he was.
If I didn’t, they’d find him with me, and us a big pile of meat.
But we would have names.
We would not be unknown.
Our mothers would have something to bury.
Doubting Thomas

So still, you couldn't have been anything other than hunkered down, waiting to weather the next barrage of shells. I was sure of it. You were tucked tight, and dead men sprawl the way men do after incredible sex. I snuggled up next to you, hip to hip, nudged your arm and whispered, *Don't be an ass, Tom, move over.* Quiet, so quiet I knew they would never find us, that I would owe you a beer or seven for playing statue so well. Hours, not a whisper, and I got angry, poked at your side, needing to know you were scared too, but you weren't. You were silent. I couldn't even hear you breathe and I hated you. I hated you until my pant leg was soaked through, and I figured you finally turned human and were terrified like me, and I loved you again. I laughed at you for pissing yourself, but looked down to see it was blood.
With Apology to D. H. Lawrence

I never saw a Marine sorry for himself.
A captain will pluck his fallen brass button from the dust and put it into his pocket before dropping on the field without ever having felt sorry for himself.
Marines don’t die, we go to hell and regroup!
—Unknown Marine
In Praise of Kevlar

It weighs the same as steel
and costs more than blood.
He puts it on quickly, betting his life
on a fiber developed for bicycle tires.
He trusts it to halt enemies before
the tender meat of his heart.
It guards the slick spools of his humid intestines.
It promises him his daughter's face.
When it catches a bullet,
it leaves a halo on his chest,
proof that angels travel by ammunition.
Mail Call

The mail can be delayed days, or weeks. Sometimes I get stacks of letters all at once. She writes every other day, small news and apologies that her life is not exciting. I told her some guys get jealous, who get no mail at all. She cried, and because it was February, bought seventeen boxes of valentines, and wrote messages in every one. Thank yous, love yous and miss yous, her stilted handwriting to the edges of flimsy colored paper notes. Everyone in 3rd Battalion 3rd Marines got three. Everyone has cartoon Mickeys and Minnies, pink hearts swimming over mousey heads, taped to their bunk or tucked into their bag. She is everywhere now, like the flag.
Please Send Crayola

Deodorant is on the list, and chapstick to keep mucous membranes from cracking in the heat.

Chocolate, he says, and don't mind warnings that it will melt, we will lick the wrappers and be happy.

But mostly, he says, send crayons, because the streets are the same color as the buildings are the same color as the midday sky. Because the women all wear black, and everything is the color of duty, or earth.

He wants to give children something fierce like fireworks, like Atomic Tangerine, Cotton Candy and Tropical Rain Forest. He wants them to create new landscapes, to overwrite the sullen mountains.
Pickles

When they ask him about home, he doesn’t think of Robert Moses or Jones Beach, the bodegas of Brentwood

or the smell of powdered sugar from the Entenmann’s plant a few blocks from his high school. He doesn’t

name his dog, or his sisters, or mention his mother’s recipe for homemade stuffing with bacon and sausage.

He doesn’t think of his father’s wounds bound with black electrical tape so that he could still bend his fingers
to rewire traffic lights. The first thing that comes to mind are pickles. Obscenely large, a dollar each at the flea market.

Better than churros. Better than chocolate, the garlicky burn at the back of his throat, ghosting his fingers

until lemon juice burns away the last lingering whiff. He hasn’t had one in years, and now he has lost his name,
his parents, and the small house with the neat yard. He holds on to pickles, one more reason to get home.
Domestic Soldiers

When there were no blankets, we wove fine tapestries of profanity to keep our sluggish blood from freezing. We sewed each other’s hungry wounds with the delicacy of women embroidering wedding gowns. Whoever packed the field stove we called Ma until we were fed, food cooked with the same gas that ran our truck, tasting like furtive movement in the dark. And when it came time to sleep, we became wives, spooned against our neighbor’s body, feigning sleep, finding comfort against the oily foreign night.
Letter Home

The call to prayer is more accurate than the stars here. I could navigate by adhan, if I were so inclined.

Sometimes I am tempted to drop to the ground and pray. Every day I find something new to give thanks for. Today it is my knees, these unloved pistons, hard hills down the long strands of my legs.

I take it for granted, I know, that I will always be able to step, crouch, bend, to rest my elbow on the left one, put my chin in my hand and watch you washing dishes beneath lace curtains in the sun. But for now these bone-springs are still mine. I will run the course seven times, once for each letter in your name.

And if I have enough breath at the end, I will bellow. Perhaps the walls of this war will fall down.
Come, the Hunters of Men

Unshy and unquiet, boarding metal warhorses, climbing like plague into the bloated bellies of helicopters, and the snipers invisible, patient, snake-sliding into the corner of your eye. Boldly we watch them watch us: flicker of curtain, trembling lashes beneath the draped hijab, a child’s wide eyes above a storefront window, young wolf in the path of new hunters.
True Stories

1.

He wrote about dull mountainside detail, said they wanted books on anything but war.

Ecstatic the way only a librarian can be, she mailed ten boxes and promised more.

It was his sister's fault the XO was confused, men strewn across the mountain, bewitched by dead writers. Patrick stood at attention, handed a dog-eared book to the XO, who scratched his head.

*Paradise Lost?* he asked, baffled. *Are you kidding me, Marine?* He spat by his boots and cursed.

The man who hated to read as a kid said, "Sir! I wanted Beowulf, but Livaudais got to it first."

2.

His sister refers to herself as a *dollar store whore*. No one complains, they each grab three more sticks of deodorant, chapstick, cheap romance novels and chocolate. At night, they dance to bad music: tribute bands, discount CD songs about fast cars and pretty girls. They sing along until their throats are dry and attrition drags them to their cots. Each thin mattress sags as they tear through books like zealots, like fault lines, dreaming in whispers, *Who is John Galt?*
Battleground Crosses: Roll Call

We stand in a row and answer the roll. Captain Kelly calls the names of absent men. We can almost believe that they are late, tired from reading all night, playing hooky, on the phone, staring at the bottom of the bunk above at photos of their daughters, dogs or cars. Opening cans in the mess to steal a sniff of air from home.

Kelly yells the names of three missing men. The wind tries to answer for them, and is ignored. The wind has not bled into coarse sand. The wind has not covered us from fire with the soft parts of its body, whispered brother in our ears or plugged our bleeding holes with gauze. The wind does not wear tags in case it comes home missing its face.

He screams the names of three fallen Marines and now it is not funny, because they are not playing football. They are not scratching out letters to mom, not calling through howling wind to say Happy Thanksgiving to their nieces. They are not napping, or eating, or short-sheeting our bunks. They are not late. They are not wearing their boots, which stand here without them. They are not wearing their tags, wound around their rifles. They are not wearing their helmets, hung on their rifle butts. They are not holding their rifles, which have become spines for these silent battleground crosses.
3: These Terrible Sacraments

Fortuna Fortes Juvat
(Fortune Favors the Brave)
Bargaining with Gods

—for Joanne K. Harris

Saturday mornings she wakes early, rides the siren downtown, pours blood back into bodies, winds plastic pipe into the soft tissue of the throat, every life she saves marked in the column of mercies God owes her son. Sundays, the soldier’s mother lays prostrated on the lawn, collecting every seventh blade of grass, a bouquet for belligerent Mars reeking of violence done by domestic hands.
The Refusal

My brother is three years old, spaghetti smeared across his face, chubby fists waving. He is too young to wander deserts with uniformed men. He is a shaggy teenager who refuses to wash his socks, playing hair-bands too loudly. He is not blasting mortars or catcalling to the cadence of fifty calibers. He would never lie so quietly—he hums even in his sleep. That still thing is not my brother. My brother whoops with joy, sings with Sinatra at the top of his lungs, swings from a star at sixty miles an hour across wild Hawaiian terrain.

The body in that box is not my brother. You better put this back where you found it, because I am not taking it home.
Lament of the Lance Corporal’s Wife

Cameras show children
hunkering under their desks
and praying to whatever gods
their parents told them were true.
A lone dandelion blooms
on my manicured lawn,
it cries out for the company of brothers
and the wind whispers wait — I will build you an army.

The reporter’s words are lost in chaos
and shouts in a language I don’t speak.
Have you learned it?
Does its flavor dance on your tongue
in the long nights you spend in desert cold?
If you whispered its slithering rhythms in the dark,
would I feel safe again?

I pull a dress over my head
because it is Monday.
Because the bills on the table scream I must go to work.
Because the schools charge one hundred seven dollars
for our son’s textbooks.
Cold blue satin spills down my cheek
and the fabric settles, heavy on my shoulders
like a widow’s shroud.
I want to spend my nights unraveling it.
I will call myself Penelope.
I will pray to Poseidon to carry you home.

This is your third tour of duty.
I comfort myself with that number, three:
terrible times do not travel in fours.
I watch the news the way zealots pray.
You taught me how to count stripes, and stars—
some woman will be missing her sergeant.
Some mother will receive the chill comfort
of bullets shot into clouds and a well-folded flag.
They have not reported any lance corporals dead,
I have bargained with God to keep chaplains away.
Between six and two, I am married to the news,
armrest worn threadbare where I have traced
your name with my finger as I learn
the color of blood is everywhere the same.
I am shocked and awed in our livingroom
as I dully slice green beans, zucchini,
summer squash, sometimes my thumb.
The color of blood is everywhere the same.

You told me a soldier’s ears ring
with the echo of every round he fires.
I wonder if you will remember
my voice, if the lines will ever be clear
long enough for me to say my I love yous,
to say I was wrong for not maiming you
in our warm Kentucky kitchen
when I had the chance to keep you safe.
A simple slip of the filet knife
and I could have kept you home.

The news is gore splashed across
magazines at the grocery store, headlines
singing how yesterday’s boys become men
trying to keep their insides in.
I wait for the homecoming,
the safe and sound. I expect a man,
but the war comes home to me in the shape of love,
and I must learn language all over again.
Kaneohe Bay

—For the 3rd Battalion 3rd Marines

Fortuna Fortes Juvat—fortune favors the brave. But she also likes the smell of blood, which is why you train the way you do, with full field carry and live rounds, acrid smoke rising against cerulean skies, sharp contrast to yellow hibiscus. After two tours in-country, you know that Fortune is fickle, so it is just as well you can defend the girl’s honor now, her crying on the curb as you pound the boy who put rough hands on the pale blush of her skin. Others look the other way or cheer, because those are the rules. Tourists have no idea, confused at the pidgin Melli Kalikimaka greeting, not knowing hookers are easy to spot in their clear-heeled sandals at Dunkin’ Donuts. This is terrain you know, familiar battles already won and lost. You steer your wayward mother and sisters toward less tropical footwear, laughing, without explaining why.
Send me the spent shells
of your enemies. I will string
the brass of the bullets

that missed into a necklace
of luck. I will wear it until
the greenblack stain creeps

around my throat like a bruise,
a death-echo. A reminder of my
promise. Where you go, I follow.

Always.
The Send-off

You think I am being silly. 
I am not religious, but you are 
going to war. I sit at your feet 
with a basin of hot water, 
scrubbing your sturdy sole, 
working sudsy fingers between 
your toes, memorizing each 
toeprint whorl, kneading 
muscles and skin over 
your most delicate bones.

If my hair were long enough, 
I would dry your feet with it.

I understand that impulse 
now, kneeling before you, 
why women pray by ironing 
a lover’s flesh with our own, 
as though we are an armor. 
I understand the need to press 
hands to a body not in love, 
but as an anointing, the impulse 
to hang hope on a whisper of sun through clouds and call it God.
This Is Not Tragedy

I am home, on my wooden front porch, watching planes garland the sky with smoke and the maple die of some gnawing green disease. This is not tragedy. In my kitchen I trip over the dog's bone. I am also out of milk and beer, but this is not tragedy. I put my hands inside men's bodies and prayed, a disciple to violence. This is awful, but it is not tragedy.

I wore cordite like cologne, and I know that water weighs eight pounds per gallon but feels like much more. The same weight as my daughter, but less than a human head, which can be crushed
like an orange. And we live, or we die, or something in between,

and still it is not tragedy because we were the ones with rifles.
These Terrible Sacraments

Bodies piled like cordwood, stacked so that we had to move great gouts of earth with our hands, lest we tear what was left. They came, guardian angels, or picky anthropologists, moving among bones, as though they had been born to wander mass graves, collecting pieces of what had been alive, puzzling them back into meaning.

I go back, lie on a cot, think about how the wretched survivors—mothers collecting teeth from their sons’ crushed skulls, husbands looking for buttons matching a wife’s last dress—walked the chaos in straight lines. I pick up a pen. I start calling her Rebar in my letters, she doesn’t ask why and I don’t say. I don’t tell her she is my scaffolding, the grid laid to help me hold these piles of buttons and bracelets and bones, keeping me from buckling under the weight of these terrible sacraments.
4: The Way War Comes To Me
Patrick Speaks of Wealth

They are so poor, he says, they sit on rough patches of dirt stacking rocks to pass the time while goats scavenge the garbage and eat what they could not.
He watched a boy shoot a man for taking a fist-sized rock from the boy’s side of the mountain. *It was just a rock,* he says, looking at his hands. *Not a gem, or shiny, or something you could trade for food. It was just a rock.*
He places a smooth gray stone at the base of our bonsai tree.
Negative Space (The Homecoming)

No checkpoints where
I must decide if a woman
is in labor or intent

on sending a chaplain
to my mother. A cell
phone will not detonate

the stop sign at the end
of the block. No snipers
like crows crowding

rooftops. No reason not
to feed beggars. No bombs
strapped in stray dogs’ bellies.
Faded

He sees the dirty aluminum underside
of a plane too long without a wash,
the dull underside of a gull's wing,
mist over slate. The color of rain
on pavement, of empty nothing,
the hue of a smog-choked sky,
a fog-bound sea. The bleached
tint of a man who knows the taste
of death, and makes it dinner.
He sees a sky faded into glass.

He remembers women loved them.
Before the war, his eyes were blue.
An Affection for Absinthe

afterimages of tracer rounds
scarred into his retinas
and headaches ricocheting
between his temples, then resting
behind his eyes like scattered
shrapnel are the only souvenirs
he brought home from the war.
Language Lessons

"Do you know how they say *get back* in Arabic?" He flicks the safety off, shouts "CLICK!" and waits for us to laugh.
Monday Morning School Crossing

The neon crossing guard puts out her cigarette, then her hand, motions to three young boys across the street. We sit, warm and dry in the Jeep, lulled by lack of motion and the rhythmic sweep of the wipers, watching them walk across sharing a ragged maroon umbrella. A blue Chevy, late for work, or court, or a wedding, slides past the guard despite her furious wave and whistling. I see your lips tighten, your eyes narrow, your knuckles whiten on the wheel. I know you are thinking a different place, and I the guard, and you would pay for your hurry with your life.
**Young Veteran**

He met his wife in a fender-bender, says he could tell she had a lovely behind and wanted to meet her. He does not say he missed the brake because of his surprise at a stranger's eyes looking back from the rearview mirror.
Inside Out

I am raw with it, this need to know why
you treat me as though I am on the verge

of breaking. Why you sleep on our faded
couch, a firearm under the pillow, dog chasing
dream-rabbits at your feet when I need
to feel you warm beside me, to hold

the hard meat of your thigh between mine
as I sleep. Instead, you tuck me in, kiss

my forehead and walk away whispering,
I know what you would look like inside-out.
When You Came Home from the War

your body was a war-torn city.
We rubbed against each other
and it sounded like violins scowling.
We loved like October maples scream
and we loved like kudzu, overtaking all things.
We were lovers because there was nothing else
we could think to do with our bodies
but burn them.
Hands

Asleep, he keeps his hands under the pillow, waking immediately if one slips nude into moonlight. He holds me crossing his arms at the wrist, as though I am satin, easily marred. When he first came home, reluctant to skim my body with his hands, angry, I forced his palm to my breasts. He pulled me into the shower, sobbing, soaping, as though by touching me with war-stained hands I was soiled beyond cleaning. I try not to hate things made of metal that he handles with ease. I try not to wish to be a rifle with an easy trigger.
The Way War Comes to Me

His stories are filtered, weak coffee, bleached of blood and culled of language

sisters should not hear. I listen between the lines, in the quiet before his words

where there used to be brash energy, the waterfall spill muted. Miserly, he doles

out those pieces of his life, hiding the fresh pink of new scars on pale skin, afraid

he loses too much of himself with speaking of it, that the magic of silence might cure him.
This House is Not a Desert

Leave your thick-soled boots beside the daffodils encroaching on the porch, lay down the knife in favor of a spoon for your soup. Turn the radio off. Hang your helmet in the closet. I will turn on the bathroom light so you can move without turning furniture into so much kindling. If you try not to wage war on anything greater than the plucky dandelions dotting our front lawn, I will make sure my words do not become landmines. This house is not a desert. The sound of the wind against the window is not an accident of architecture or angles. The glare of the sun from the west on your way home is not a warning, but a beacon. This place is as safe as we make it. Put down your gun and come to bed where you belong.
He Asks Me Not to Bind My Hair

says beauty should
not be covered, says
bindings and shrouds
give him nightmares.
He kisses my chestnut
fall, breathes that he needs
to see the liquid swing of
my freedom to remember
that he made it home.
You Are Only Happy When It Rains

when the green things are fed
and fruit hangs heavy in pregnant trees.

When lush curtains billow
and our home feels like a garden,

everything alive, growing. You find
new joy in color, the brash azaleas of summer,

pleased most when the air is warm enough
to lay me down naked at noon.
Biography

Colleen S. Heges, known for her work at the University of Vermont, is noted for her book "Goddess and Mother: The Laundromat Book." In 2003, Heges was appointed to The Vermont Arts Council, where she served as the Chair. She later moved to New York, the state she was born in. Her novel, "Euphoria," explores her senatorial career.
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Biography

Collison B. Hanes, Jr., is a member of the University of Pennsylvania Law B.S. Board of Visitors. In 2002, he was appointed as the first Associate Dean of the Pennsylvania Law School and as the Associate Dean of the School of Public Health. He was born in New York, attended Duke University, and received his Bachelor of Science from the University of North Carolina.
Biography

Colleen S. Harris, Assistant Professor on the library faculty at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, is the author of *God in my Throat: The Lilith Poems*, finalist in the 2008 St. Lawrence Book Award and published by Bellowing Ark Press in 2009. Nominated for the Pushcart Prize, Colleen’s work has appeared in *The Louisville Review, Wisconsin Review, River Styx, Adirondack Review, Bellowing Ark* and others. She holds an MFA in Writing from Spalding University, and an MS in Library Science from the University of Kentucky. A native of Bay Shore, New York, she has lived and worked in Kentucky, Georgia, North Carolina, and currently resides in Chattanooga, Tennessee with her basset hound, Otto.
Colleen S. Harris, Assistant Professor on the library faculty at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, is the author of *God in my Throat: The Lilith Poems*, finalist in the 2008 St. Lawrence Book Award and published by Bellowing Ark Press in 2009. Nominated for the Pushcart Prize, Colleen’s work has appeared in *The Louisville Review, Wisconsin Review, River Styx, Adirondack Review, Bellowing Ark* and others. She holds an MFA in Writing from Spalding University, and an MS in Library Science from the University of Kentucky. A native of Bay Shore, New York, she has lived and worked in Kentucky, Georgia, North Carolina, and currently resides in Chattanooga, Tennessee with her basset hound, Otto.

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