



# The Spectral Wilderness (Wick Poetry First Book)

*Oliver Bendorf*

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**The Spectral Wilderness (Wick Poetry First Book)** Oliver Bendorf

Winner of the 2013 Stan and Tom Wick Poetry Prize

Mark Doty, Judge

"It's a joy... to come nearer to a realm of experience little explored in American poetry, the lives of those who are engaged in the complex project of transforming their own gender... Oliver Bendorf writes from a paradoxical, new-world position: the adult voice of a man who has just appeared in the world. A man emergent, a man in love, alive in the fluid instability of any category."

--Mark Doty, from the Foreword

"Bendorf's poems give us all we have ever wanted."

--Natalie Diaz, author of *When My Brother Was An Aztec*

"Astonishing."

--The Literary Review

"Bendorf's collection indeed opens the door to a spectral wilderness, an otherworldly pastoral, a queer ecology endlessly transformed by possibility, grief, and the unruly wanting of our names and bodies. Stunningly lyrical and beautifully theoretical, *The Spectral Wilderness* is an invitation one cannot turn down; the book calls us to travel with Bendorf, to study the topography of becoming because "what we used to be matters" in the way that language matters--however fleeting, however mistaken, however contradictory it might be."

--Stacey Waite, author of *Butch Geography*

"What gorgeous and ravenous rackets Oliver Bendorf's poems are made of; what a yearning and beautiful heart. 'Lift a geode from the ground and crack me open,' he writes, which is more or less what these poems do for me: break me open to what might sparkle and blaze, what might glisten and burn inside. *The Spectral Wilderness* is a wonderful book."

--Ross Gay, author of *Against Which* and *Bringing the Shovel Down*

Named one of *Entropy Magazine's* picks for Best Poetry Books of 2014.

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