

Anthology ed. by Helen Klein
Ross

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The Traveler's Vade Mecum

ANTHOLOGY ED. BY

Helen Klein Ross

Everyman's meets Twitter. Most anthologies gather poems already written. This is a crowd-sourced compilation of new poems, inspired by a tweet that linked the anthologist to an historical document. It's a compendium of new works by sixty-seven poets, including some of the most celebrated working today. For poetry lovers and lovers of history.

The original *Traveler's Vade Mecum*, published in 1853, contained thousands of telegrams. Ross chose telegrams as titles for poems solicited from dozens of poets, including Bollingen Prize winner Frank Bidart and former US Poet Laureate Billy Collins to create a digital-age compendium of old-world poetics. Here are lyric poems, language poems, prose poems, found poems, haikus, pantoums, ekphrases, epistolary poems, acrostics, sonnets and mirror sonnets. Demonstrating the range of what poetry can do, this book provides a fascinating glimpse into the habits and social aspects of 19th century America—and shows how we have evolved 163 years later.

Praise for *The Traveler's Vade Mecum*

“To open this eccentric and improbable volume of sixty-seven poems by sixty-seven contemporary poets responding to sixty-seven pre-fabricated statements found in an antique collection for ‘the convenience of persons traveling on business or for pleasure’ is to take an unexpected trip in the company of various and surprising voices: the dead, the missing, the missed, the imagined, and the re-imagined. Ahab and Faust and the murderers of Garcia Lorca show up among the un-famous (but never ordinary) in meditations and tributes, curses and love songs, all originating in ready-made phrases fashioned for expedient use. Keep this book by your bedside and in your kitchen; read it at night and first thing in the morning, savoring its felicitous lines with your first coffee of the day.”

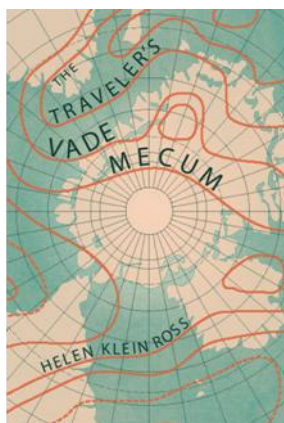
—Peg Boyers, Executive Editor of *Salmagundi*, author of *To Forget Venice*

“Essential reading for poetry lovers and experimenters, *The Traveler's Vade Mecum* dramatically and wittily expands the notion of the literary prompt.”

—Billy Collins, United States Poet Laureate

“In an inspired rediscovery of A. C. Baldwin's *The Traveler's Vade Mecum*, Helen Klein Ross and her poets have magically transformed an obscure 19th century invention into lyrical gold.”

—Arthur Molella, Director Emeritus, Smithsonian National Museum of American History



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More praise for *The Traveler's Vade Mecum*

"Helen Klein Ross connects poets of today to a clever telegraphic idea from yesterday, and in doing so re-introduces readers to A. C. Baldwin, a 19th century consumer advocate whose vision and persistence impacted the world in unexpected ways."

—Ralph Nader, Father of modern American consumer movement,
author, Founder of American Museum of Tort Law

"An anthology needs to be remarkable in its conception, array of authors, and execution. Check. Check. Check. The body of the book is wonderfully arranged—it can be read straight-through or serendipitously. It will feel just right in the hand (and look great on screen)."

—Alan Ziegler, Editor, Author, Director of Pedagogy at Columbia
University

Biographical Note

Helen Klein Ross's poetry, essays and fiction have appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times* and in *The Iowa Review* where it won the 2014 Iowa Review award in poetry. Her second novel, *What Was Mine* from Simon & Schuster/Gallery Books was star-reviewed and debuted on January 5, 2016. It sold out on Amazon before 8 AM and was chosen by People magazine as a "Best New Book of 2016." Helen graduated from Cornell University and received an MFA from The New School. She lives with her husband in New York City and Salisbury, Connecticut.

From *The Traveler's Vade Mecum*

IT IS NO SECRET HERE

Dirt, wrote a British anthropologist,
is matter out of place. Drop a grape
from bowl to table and we call it *dirty*.
Drop a grape to the floor and it is *trash*.
Bowl, table: these are ordering agents,
ways to tell the functional from fallen.

Skin, tendon: these are ordering agents.

You want to kiss my mouth, but not
the teeth inside my mouth. You want
to hold my hand, but not the blood
within that hand. There is a truth
in you, but it won't be the dirty truth
until it tumbles into the air between
us. In this city, there is always
a long walk home in 7 a.m. light,
high heels stabbing the subway grates.
A walk home past gutters littered
with the non sequitur of chicken bones,
wings that once held a dream of flight.

—Sandra Beasley