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# Questions from Outer Space

POEMS BY  
Diane Thiel

Compelling poems with brave, insightful, often humorous observations of the world.

Diane Thiel's eagerly anticipated collection of poems, *Questions from Outer Space*, explores fresh and often humorous perspectives that capture the surreal quality of our swiftly changing lives on this planet. The poems travel through questions on many fronts, challenging assumptions and locating unique angles of perception. This thought-provoking book reflects a deep engagement with the natural world, a questioning of our built systems, the expansive wilderness of parenting, and the complexities of navigating outer and inner space.

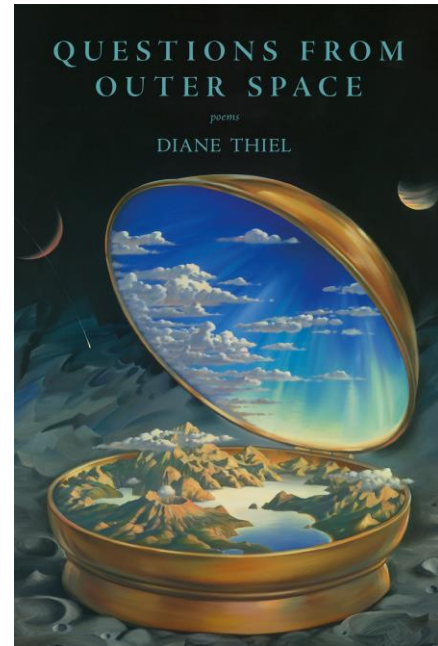
## ADVANCE PRAISE

“Diane Thiel is a poet of unusual worldliness, capable of bringing biology, anthropology, and global travel to the mix. This is a strong new collection from a poet who has been expanding her vision and refining her art: ‘The seahorse in the brain / appears to be in charge / of memory and navigation.’ The objectivity of science mixed with a human concern for how we find our way. These are field notes from ‘the edge of reason,’ poems of intelligence and concern. *Questions from Outer Space* is a book tuned to deep experience of life on earth, marking the welcome return of a first-rate poet.”

—**David Mason**, author of *The Sound: New and Selected Poems*

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Diane Thiel is the author of eleven books of poetry and nonfiction, including *Echolocations* and *Resistance Fantasies*. Thiel's work has appeared in *Poetry*, *The Hudson Review*, *The Hopkins Review*, and numerous other publications. Her awards include a PEN Award, the Nicholas Roerich Prize, and a Fulbright. Thiel received her undergraduate and graduate degrees from Brown University and has traveled and lived in Europe, South America, Asia, and Australia, working on literary and environmental projects. She is Regents' Professor of English and Associate Chair at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque and lives in the Sandia Mountain foothills.



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**MORE PRAISE FOR *QUESTIONS FROM OUTER SPACE***

“Diane Thiel is the real thing—a genuinely memorable lyric poet whose intuitive music strikes the difficult balance between the mythic and the real, the personal and the historical, the familiar and the unknown.”

—**Dana Gioia**, poet, critic, and American Book Award winner

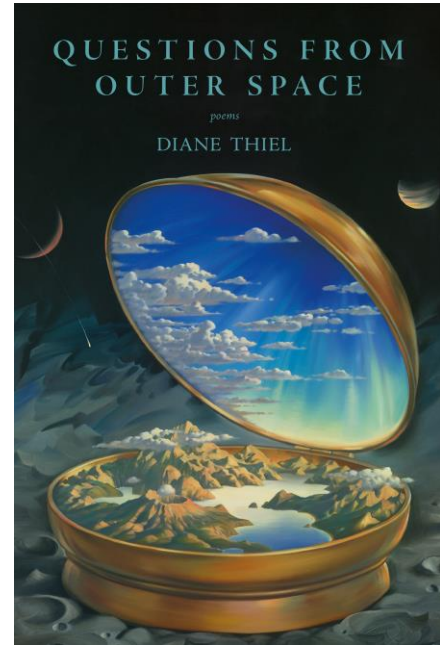
**FROM *QUESTIONS FROM OUTER SPACE***

**The Farthest Side**

Some afternoons, in the small space of time  
between my coming home from school  
and his heading off to work, second shift, and maybe  
some of third (what did I know of those austere days),  
my father would have a question waiting for me.  
We couldn’t usually find a way to get beyond  
all the history that divided us, that kept us  
far from each other, for such a small house.

But when I came home, he would sometimes  
have the paper open to *The Far Side*,  
usually one that went a bit further over the edge,  
and would ask if I understood this one.  
We had our dark favorites that were fairly clear.  
The engorged snake stuck in the crib with the teddy bear.  
The spider web at the bottom of the slide—  
“If we pull this off, we’ll eat like kings.”  
But the fact that he asked me, even back then,  
about the more complicated ones, believing I would know  
about natural selection, space, modern art, or poetry  
meant more to me than I would have admitted,  
more than I even realized at the time.

When we talked about Cow Poetry, it went beyond  
the cow’s damning the electric fence. The pilots wondering  
what a mountain goat was doing in that cloud bank ahead  
brought us to the moment outside the frame.  
Maybe Larson intended that a few of these,  
like the meat in the bowl on the window table,  
or Cow Tools, with its unrecognizable objects,  
would resist any quick interpretation  
and just get people talking.



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