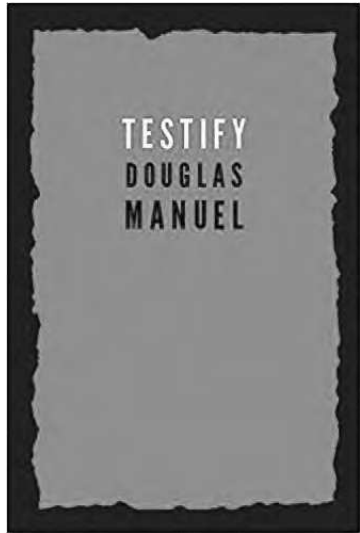




present.” He writes 20 short chapters, little essays, around this theme: “The Founding Fathers tried to protect us from the threat they knew, the tyranny that overcame ancient democracy. Today, our political order faces new threats, not unlike the totalitarianism of the twentieth century. We are no wiser than the Europeans who saw democracy yield to fascism, Nazism, or communism. Our one advantage is that we might learn from their experience.” — *Anita Johnson*

## poetry

**Testify** by Douglas Manuel. Red Hen Press, \$17.95.



With his first poem, “Loud Looks,” Douglas Manuel announces the theme of this poetry collection: blackness as experienced by one who innately does not want to live hemmed in and marshaled by the dictates of a cultural environment. An environment that demands rigorous conformity to a strict, self-regulated identity

that it employs in response to being embedded within a larger culture that rejects and isolates it. By so strictly maintaining that identity it hampers and tangles itself in the web of that larger, abusive culture, directly contradicting its intended goal.

The first poem lists some requisite criteria for acceptance — “wanted to be a rapper? Check. / Father went to prison? Check. / Brother too? Check. /..... Hung pictures of Luke Perry on my bedroom wall? / What?” — with a comical, confessional twist.

The poem samples the humor and heartache that make this a memorable read and is a perfect introduction to the dilemmas, loyalty, guilt and sense of liberation Manuel catalogues in *Testify*. It is not that he doesn’t identify with black culture, but he perceives a wider scope of possibility, while watching his family struggle and destroy themselves. He is a champion of the humanism and mutuality that has the greatest potential to melt the unfortunate, very real and complex (though sometimes generic and commercial) boundaries between people, which they use to feel visible and vital in a society that attempts to tell them they have no value. — *Paul Quillen*

**Hairdo** by Rachel B. Glaser. *The Song Cave*, \$17.95.



Be warned: Rachel Glaser’s second book of poems may cause readers to drop everything just to lie in the tender arms of her world. Glaser’s voice sings of orchids and wooden, one-dimensional villains. She describes epics of lonely boys, hums with the dull contemplation of bored porn actors and laments cartoon characters lost in the miasma

of this world. Her singular femininity dances to the tune of desperate infatuation, spoon-feeds the blinding and capricious taste of adolescent love, observes the dickless sight of conspicuous wealth and discerns the stolid and sweet atmosphere of committed romantic partners. Glaser inhabits the body of her narrators and, in so doing, chants the weirdness and intimacy of being human in this strange place. It’s difficult to do justice to the effect of good poetry. When a poet like Glaser offers a true harmony, my advice is to simply give in and float in the uncomplicated ardor of her saltwater lyrics. — *Matthew Denis*

## young adult

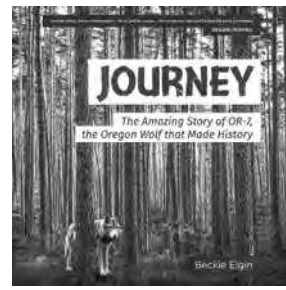
**Sparked** by Marlena Watrous and Helena Echlin. Inkshares, \$11.99.



Teen fiction set in Oregon with teens that have superpowers living in an Airstream trailer? I’m sold. Malena Watrous, a South Eugene High grad, and co-author Helena Echlin, bring us into the world of 15-year-old Laurel Goodwin, who wakes up to find her sister has gone missing and soon discovers that in order to save her sister, she has to save the world from a devastating prophecy.

The authors take the hackneyed tropes of teens with special powers (*Twilight* anyone?), teen romance, mean girls and even time travel and blend them into a fun and at times gripping teen tale. My one complaint, as someone who lives in an Airstream trailer, is the one that Laurel, her sister and single mom live in with mom’s creeper boyfriend, seems awfully large for some of the action that occurs there. But I’m willing to let that slide for a tale well told. — *Camilla Mortensen*

**Journey: The Amazing Story of OR-7, the Oregon Wolf that Made History** by Beckie Elgin. Inkwater Press, \$16.95.



*Journey* tells the remarkable tale of the first wolf, OR-7, to roam the Pacific Northwest in nearly a century. The book is filled with breathtaking photos of Pacific Northwest scenery, intricate pictures and illustrations of wolves, and detailed maps to guide you through the wolf’s

journey visually as you read about his 4,000-mile trek. Author Beckie Elgin writes with a passion that is sure to bring enjoyment for any reader, despite it being targeted for middle-school kids, and her unique background gives her a deep understanding of the wolf’s journey that is evident in the book. The daughter of a zookeeper, Elgin’s childhood years were spent intertwined with wolves and wildlife, giving her writing a true sense of life and creating an inevitable connection between OR-7 and the reader.

*Journey* is educational and informative, fun and courageous. Finishing the book without a new appreciation for these complex creatures and nature is impossible. A portion of the proceeds from sales goes to support Oregon Wild and their efforts to protect wolves, and at the end of the book you may find that you learned not only about the detailed, daring journey of one wolf, but also something about yourself. — *Morgan Theophil*

**Too Shattered for Mending** by Peter Brown Hoffmeister. Alfred A. Knopf, \$17.99.



Peter Brown Hoffmeister is one of those rare adults who can somehow provide a realistic teen’s perspective while at the same time tingeing his books with the wisdom that comes from having actually survived his own troubled teen years — something he chronicles in his memoir, *The End of Boys*. In his latest work, *Too Shattered for Mending*, Hoffmeister gets inside the head of “Little” McCardell after the disappearance of his

meth-dealing grandpa, “Big,” as Little tries to survive and basically raise himself and his cousin in a rural Idaho town. Little is wonderfully adult while at the same time a wide-eyed youth. Hoffmeister brings together teen novel staples — young love and a hint of a mystery — with a *Winter’s Bone*-esque sensibility and his own gritty and, at times, bleak perspective. It’s teen fiction for a more mature audience. Hoffmeister is a South Eugene High School teacher and founder of its Integrated Outdoor Program. — *Camilla Mortensen*

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