



News release

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Big Three Detroit Engineer Takes Flight with Poetry Book

Christine Rhein has always been a writer at heart, but you might not have known it looking at her resume in the early 1990s. She went to school for mechanical engineering and then spent a decade in the automotive industry.

“Part of my job involved testing engines under harsh conditions. I tested cars in Phoenix in July (110 degrees), Fairbanks in December (minus 30 degrees), and in Florida humidity and Colorado mountains,” Rhein said.

In recent years, however, Rhein’s passion for writing returned and her first book, “Wild Flight,” a collection of poems that bridge her life as an engineer and a writer, has just been published by Texas Tech University Press.

“It’s easy to view poetry in stark opposition to engineering,” said Rhein. “After all, engineers deal with facts and data, while poets draw heavily from creativity and imagination. However, there are similarities between the two endeavors. A poem, like a car, has many features and components, all of which must function together to power the poem and produce the best possible ride for the reader.”

The subjects of Rhein’s poems range from her father’s life in Germany, to the current situation in Iraq, from her children to relationships. She has a keen eye for observation and captures what it means to be human in the most basic ways, touching on things such as Googling herself and bird-watching soldiers. Her poems are both personal and political, a true commentary on life’s juxtapositions.

“Writing poetry gives me a chance to reflect on the world and my place in it,” said Rhein.

Instead of forgetting about her engineering past, Rhein uses her first career as a building block for her second by weaving the complexity of science into her poetry, as series editor Robert A. Fink notes in the introduction:

“When asked, ‘What do you believe in?’ how many poets could answer, ‘the pulse / of algebra, all those x’s busy intersecting / all those y’s points aligned,’ then add ‘the tangle of science and poetry,’ ...? I’m thinking only a Detroit, automotive-industry, mechanical



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engineer, romantic-realist poet reconciling, opposites into paradoxes defining the joy of order and abandon.”

Christine Rhein lives in Brighton, Mich. She is a winner of the Texas Tech University Walt McDonald First-Book Competition in Poetry. Her poems have appeared in “The Gettysburg Review,” “Michigan Quarterly Review,” and “The Southern Review” and have been selected for “Poetry Daily” and “Best New Poets 2007.” She may be reached at christinerhein@gmail.com; her website is www.christinerhein.com

For more information or a review copy of the book, contact Barbara Brannon, marketing manager, Texas Tech University Press, (806) 742-2982 or via e-mail at barbara.brannon@ttu.edu.