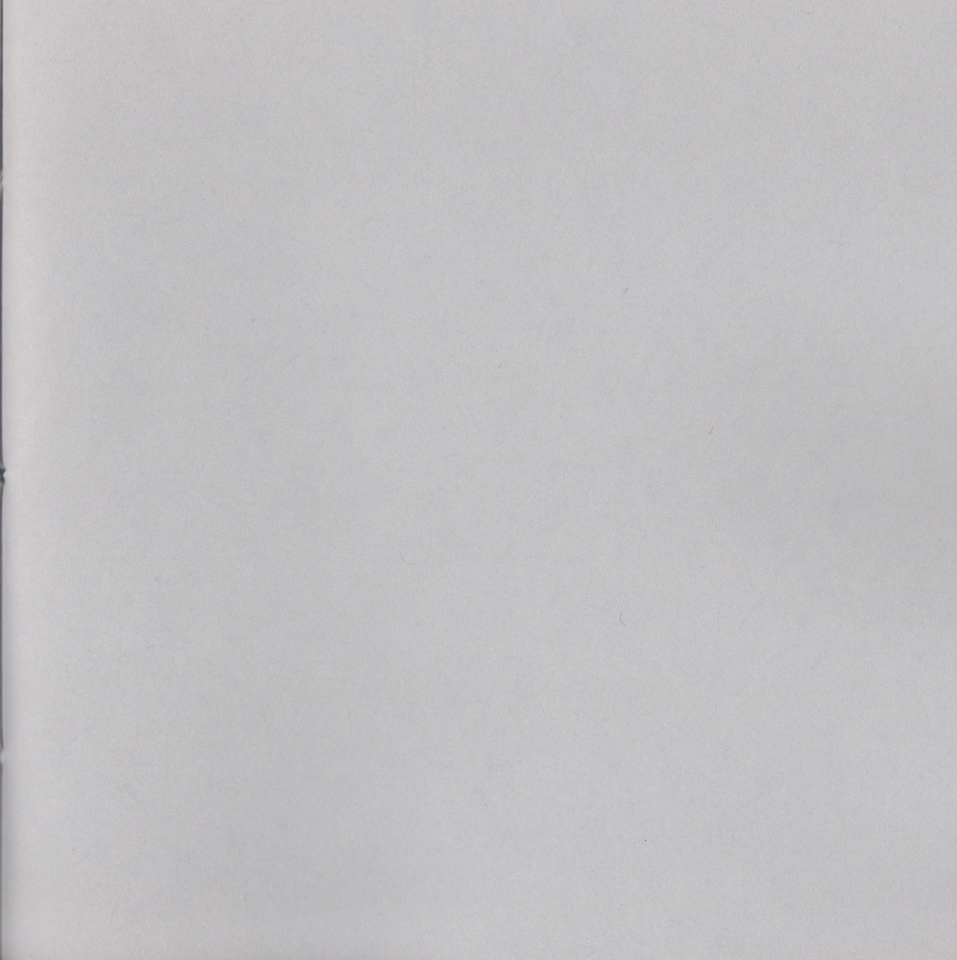


# BIRD

## *Shadow*

RONALD  
BAATZ











FOR  
JIM

BIRD SHADOW  
Ronald Baatz

RONALD

Bottle of Smoke Press  
New York

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## FIRST EDITION

Bottle of Smoke Press  
P.O. Box 66  
Wallkill, NY 12589  
[www.bospress.net](http://www.bospress.net)

The singing at dawn  
I look out the bedroom window  
for some familiar face.

Getting out of bed  
I slip over the  
cat's path.

for Irwin Touster

Crowded with roadkill  
poorly buried and beautiful  
and remembering thunder

Spring  
new grass  
silence whispering





The singing at dawn-  
I look out the bedroom window  
for some familiar faces

Getting out of bed  
I trip over the  
cat's pajamas

Covered with road dust  
peonies blind and beautiful  
and remembering thunder

Spring  
new grass  
sinful whisperings

Pulling a string  
she allows light to flow in  
which we use to find our clothes

A crow lands in its shadow-  
I land in  
this poem

Geese on the side of the road  
having never seen  
a bathroom sink

Morning-  
deep silence in  
the mayonnaise jar



Since birth the comfort of milk  
the punctualities of  
my father's shadow

After  
the baptism-  
bony fish

Like little gods eager to please  
sparrows separating light  
from darkness with song

Throughout the summer  
the warring ants experience  
one rain delay after another

Returning alone from the dance  
thinking about what  
I'm going to tell the dog

While taking a bus trip  
my eyeballs  
puzzled

Pleasures speak like rude monkeys-  
I do something  
wearing silk slippers

Know that even the gods  
have terrible breath from  
howling like bored dogs

Ah such a good morning  
to love the feeling  
of never waking up

The unblemished voyaging of a peach  
through the long  
sunny afternoon

Consciousness  
delicate as biscuit crust  
yet I can snack on the stars

Nails freshly painted-  
with tweezers she picks up  
a dead moth



The ants-  
they are living  
through their own dark ages

Setting sun  
marinating in sheep's blood-  
my eyes grow fat and sleepy

Still ignorant of its own weight  
death breaks a  
perfectly good branch

During the storm  
I paste drunken poems on windows  
using wine for glue

It seems that mosquito  
has the same painful skinny legs  
I have

Holding my burning pants  
over the pond  
for the fish to see

Gray hair  
in comb's  
yellow teeth

As if I'm not aware  
that that new loaf of meekness  
is disguising itself as bread

Restoring sight to  
the surrounding heavens-  
a flight of small birds

Hanging from the ceiling on a string  
the shadow of  
a dead fly

What upset my mother most  
was my wanting to be death  
every Halloween

The printer with the bad back  
has all to do to feed his plants  
the cricket shit he has collected



Surrounded by a ring of mosquitoes  
I resort to imitating  
a vacant tomb

Dawn-  
the length of the butter  
still the length of the blade

In a red bowl  
I burn paper swans  
at the peep show

I hire a fool to write my poems  
but discover I can do the job  
better myself

By the open window  
a number of tiny shadows  
remain faithful to the flies

Swim to the water lilies and back  
dig your nails into the water  
stay naïve

Monkey watching the moon  
being slowly eaten away  
by human sorrow

Exuberant spring greens-  
my sober bare feet  
sink into new snow

Strangers looking at strangers  
silent buttons on my shirt  
heart naked as a sausage

Long hot night-  
the tedious journey  
of an ox-pulled moon

Eventually with a seriously aging nose  
you can smell the  
seriously aging sun

In a submissive sky  
a laundry boat  
of dark clouds

As a newborn I was brought home  
from the hospital in a black car  
followed by other black cars

Bad angels in hell  
broken like horses  
but thriving like pigs

The ordeal of carving out a coffin  
is much less of a headache  
when it's for a chickadee

Ants working  
their asses off  
in Switzerland



A raw chill to the evening-  
I'm happy to see the old story  
of steam rising from a rice pot

Follow the moon everywhere-  
oldest sorrows requiring  
the oldest confidant

In the morning  
the hatless  
squirrel

Today  
I buried the dog  
and its fleas

Evening shadows drowning  
having ignored the day's  
lingering swimming lessons

The moment slippery as a mango pit-  
the big earth tips  
the roses grow lips

Seeking a lament  
for the death of peonies  
is the journey's task

Listen!  
you can tell that cricket is on its  
last leg

A punishing rain-  
the same punishing rain I knew  
back when I was a drenched child

The soul of a cloud-  
capturing it in  
a butter knife

All winter long  
leaning up against the apple tree  
a ladder used by cold shadows

Promised by one of the duller gods-  
mushrooms growing  
from buried wood

Or does the soul die  
when the body dies-  
each in the other's arms?

Looking up at so many night fires  
so faraway  
sends a shiver through me

Summer field-  
stars question me  
more than I question them

Again I swear  
never to write a poem  
longer than a brief prayer



Birds singing for squirrels-  
I fall asleep in the tall grass  
where children cannot find me

Some of the neighbors still alive-  
I hang a small cage of fat  
in the apple tree

Inseparable puny nuns  
whispering secrets  
about Adam

Wind shooting up the creek-  
a scrawny bird grows cold  
on its birthday

Unconvincing-  
what I've done with this soft clay  
what I've worked on in the rain

As though it were  
my sacred duty-  
I watch her sleep

Acting silly  
in breathtaking sunbeams  
by accident I kill a chicken

Evening-  
the milky way  
putting on makeup

The coming and going  
of dolls stuffed with sunshine-  
never stare into their eyes

Bird shadow  
smoother than feathers-  
I go home by way of the lake

First snowfall  
yet I bet the feet of the sparrow  
still smell from summer

This whole infuriating life  
not overwhelming  
old pajamas

I catch falling stars  
and put them in my eyes  
save them for a rainy woman

Feebly  
my skull holds onto what's left  
of my eyes

Evening's uncertainties  
withdraw into humans  
eating birds

New moon  
like a freshly tarred boat  
not quite ready yet to be put in water



Stop it-  
we mustn't let the waiter  
see our chopsticks kissing

Memory's opinion  
tastes like a  
blind lemon

Her eyes-  
everwidening myths  
I follow to the falls

Clothes shrinking  
on my shrinking body-  
snow falling on veins

Always complaining about the  
coldness of my shadow-  
the muse

Whole night  
smells from  
dead moths

Deluded by my shaven head  
I wash the feet of  
the solemn frog

Moist decaying yellow regrets  
easily mistaken for  
crowded roses

White eggs  
dirty fingers  
no bigger story

A pond jumps into  
the old frog-  
silence

Grinning like Shakespeare  
a mosquito flying away  
with sleeping blood

Thoughts-  
they come like birds  
I have no seeds for

Always remember that about the  
children of the world  
you need not

A good thing  
is to be  
a good  
man

Remember the children  
of the world  
and be a good  
man

Remember the children  
of the world  
and be a good  
man



**RONALD BAATZ** is the author of many books of poetry, including: *Afternoon Plums Rising*, *Bird Effort*, *In a Clay Pig's Eye*, *On the Back Porch*, *The Elephants and Everybody Else*, *White Tulips*, and *Devouring Birds*.

RONALD BAILEY is the author of many books  
of poetry including *Abandon From Being*, *End*  
*Effect in a Clay Pot*, *On the Back of the*, *The*  
*Highness and Freedom*, *End*, *When I*, and  
*Domestic*.

## COLOPHON

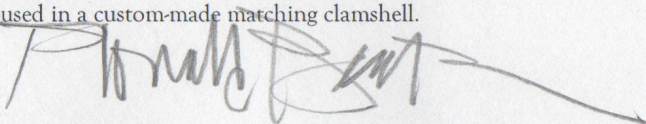
*Bird Shadow* was  
published in March 2016.

The text is set in Goudy Old Style.  
The cover is letterpress printed on a Vander-  
cook SP-15 press. Designed, printed and  
hand-bound by Bill  
Roberts in the  
hamlet of  
Wallkill,  
New York. This  
publication is limited to 113 copies;

100 copies in wraps.

26 hardcover copies (A-Z). Quarter-bound in black cloth.  
Signed by the author.

10 deluxe copies. Quarter-bound in black morocco. Each  
deluxe copy also contains the 3-poem chapbook, *Seeds*,  
that includes an original holograph poem by the author.  
Housed in a custom-made matching clamshell.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Bill Roberts", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

# COLophon

But books are  
published in March 2010.  
The text is set in Century Old Style.  
The cover is designed printed on a Vandyke  
and 21/12 from 1980, printed and  
handbound by Bill  
Roberts in the

house of

William

New York, New

York. The text is printed in 12 pt.

100 copies in white

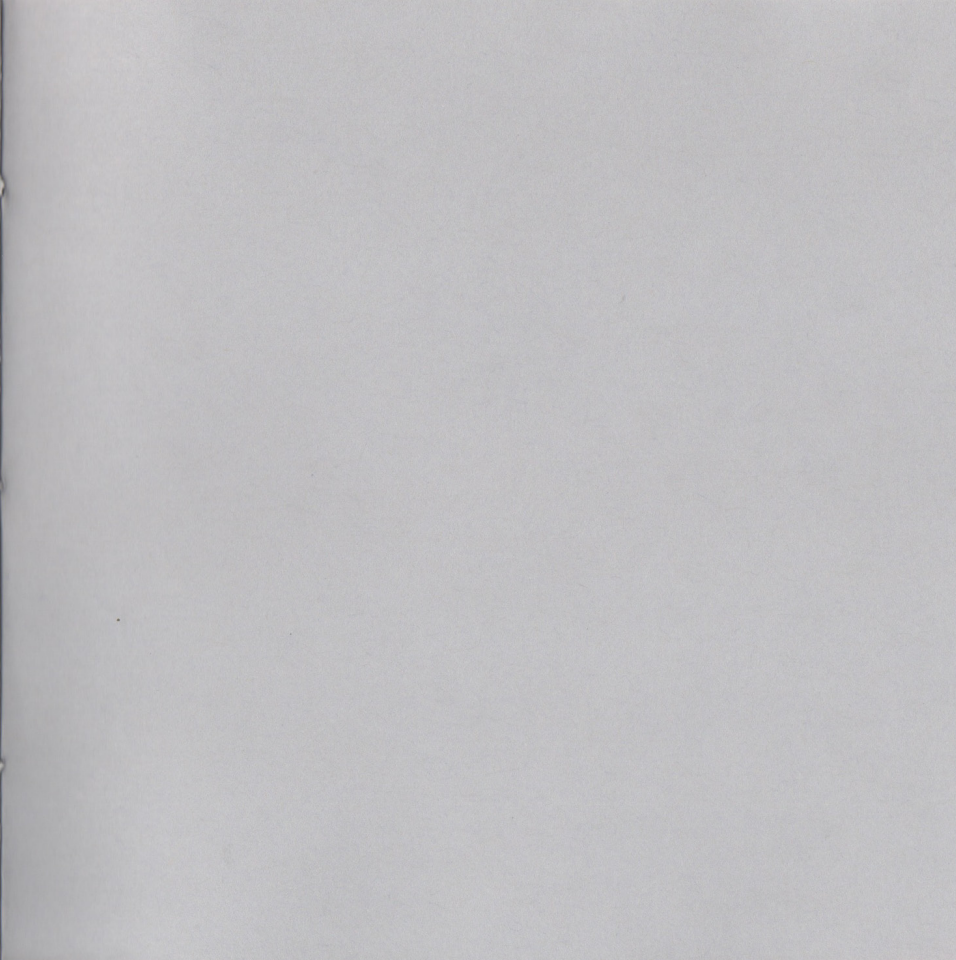
25 leather copies (A-Z) Quarter-bound in black cloth.

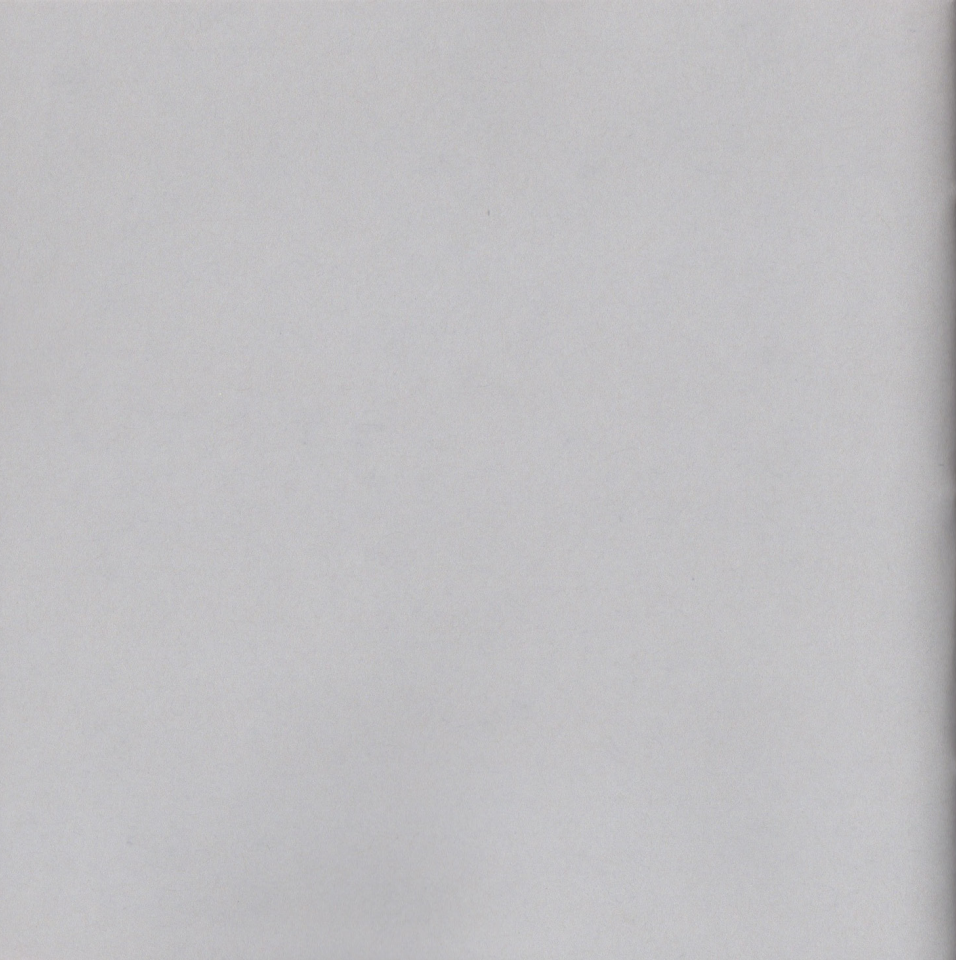
Signed by the author

10 leather copies. Quarter-bound in black leather. Each  
leather copy also contains the 100-page slipcase. Each  
copy contains an original photograph of the author  
bound in a leather-bound slipcase.

Philip Roth

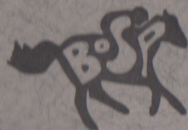












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