



2020 UNT Rilke Prize

Kathleen Graber – *The River Twice*

In *The River Twice*, Kathleen Graber offers a profoundly moving and philosophical exploration of history, both personal and cultural, as embedded in words and thereby evocative of distances that can never be closed. While the title's recollection of Heraclitus voices the ephemerality of all things, the phrase "river twice" likewise accentuates a desire to revisit the past, to double back, in light and in spite of a measure of inaccessibility. Such want emerges as critical and problematic to the forging of community and the mending of fracture. Wonder appears less at odds with engagement in our moment than as a mode of invitation. Like the pigeons in her book, those who wound themselves to feed their young, Graber's poems do not abandon the

difficult world. The poet's voice, so often juxtaposed against the abject, feels called, summoned to the kind of "beauty we expect from what's broken."





