

Blueprint and Ruin



- 1) The poems in *Blueprint and Ruin* (the section on "Ruins") guide you literally and figuratively through the ruins of the past. How do these poems clarify or complicate your reading of that particular poem?
- 2) The poems in *Blueprint and Ruin* (the section on "Ruins") have in common that they are set in a structure that has been repurposed (from a Coliseum to a 1990s shopping mall). What do these structures and their previous functions have in common? How does the speaker seem to feel about the ruins? What other kinds of cultural, familial, or personal histories haunt the poems?
- 3) The book is divided into four sections, each beginning with a long introductory poem. How do these poems open their respective segments? What images or themes seem to populate each section? Where do we begin, and by the end of the book, where do we arrive? What has changed or remained the same?
- 4) The poems in *Blueprint and Ruin* could be sorted into two stylistic categories:
 - a. The poems in *Blueprint and Ruin* (the section on "Ruins") use a formal, structured approach to poetry, often employing traditional poetic devices such as meter, rhyme, and stanzaic form.
 - b. The poems in *Blueprint and Ruin* (the section on "Ruins") use a more experimental, fragmented approach to poetry, often employing free verse, enjambement, and a focus on imagery and metaphor.How do these different formal approaches impact the tone or meaning of the poems? Are there subjects or themes that each approach tends to explore? Now choose your favorite poem from the book and imagine rewriting it in the alternate form. What might be gained or lost with the stylistic change?
- 5) The book begins with an epigraph from Lucie Brock-Broides: "The ruins of the past are the ruins of the future." What concepts might be linked to the idea of a longed-for future?

M d n i i

- 1) Poems in *Blueprint and Ruin* (the section on "Ruins") explore the idea of childhood artifacts (department store mannequins, giant roadside Muffler Man statues, Magic 8 Balls). Make a list of your own childhood artifacts. Choose one and then list images, feelings, and anecdotes related to it—what was fascinating about it to you as a child? How do you see it differently now?
- 2) The poems in *Blueprint and Ruin* (the section on "Ruins") use the apostrophe as a literary device to directly address non-human entities. Choose your own non-human entity (the houseplant you routinely overwater, the single sock in the gutter you jogged past last Tuesday) and make it your audience. What would you apologize for? Confess to?