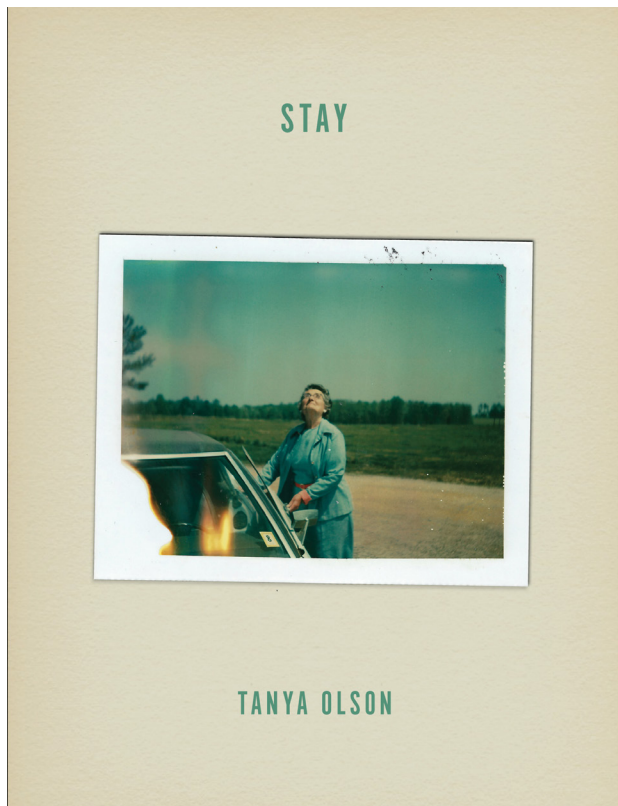


STAY BY TANYA OLSON



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Stay is a broad American exploration of what it costs to remain in a place, an idea, an identity, as well as what it costs to leave these things. Grounded in American music, these poems dig into and flee from worlds and beliefs, marking what is gained and lost with every arrival and departure.

Tanya Olson's second book, *Stay*, will be released in late spring 2019 from YesYes Books. Her first book, *Boyishly*, was published by YesYes Books in 2013 and received a 2014 American Book Award. In 2010, she won a Discovery/Boston Review prize and she was named a 2011 Lambda Fellow by the Lambda Literary Foundation. Her poem "54 Prince" was chosen for inclusion in *Best American Poems 2015*. Tanya Olson lives in Silver Spring, Maryland and is a Senior Lecturer in English at UMBC (University of Maryland, Baltimore County).

Zeno's Boat

On tumorous claws rats boarded the ship
They left their mothers behind That glossy hawk
kept tethered to deck He left his mother behind
Clinging fleas dirt and mites showed resilience
Leaving mothers behind Viruses persevered
in the blood And left their mothers behind

But mothers never forgive departures
A leaving is an arrow to your poor mother's heart
Mothers' hearts hold their young
the way young boys hold birds By a string
kept in hand With a string looped in knot

And children never forget the holding
The strength in mother's grip
comes from fine-tuning bows Underfoot
calloused rats gnaw through a box
as they eat what we carefully stored

From the masts we have spotted the inland pines
But know we will never arrive They are deep
indigenous giants We know we shall
never arrive We pray one day those towers
might fall And know we will never
arrive Miles to yards to feet to inches
Yet we know we can never arrive

Bartholomew the cobbler's son leads the group
through vespers tonight *Though your sins
be as scarlet I will make them like snow*
And ashore wave the long-leaf pines
Behind us bob a string of days
linking stay to go Below in the hold
rats swim through bilge like they
swam round their own mothers' bellies

