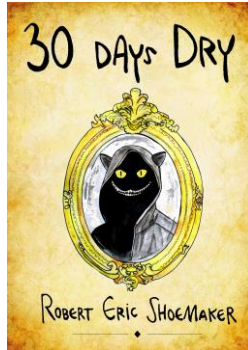




**For Immediate Release:**

10.5.15



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**“30 Days Dry” an “important,” “honest and complicated”  
poetry collection by Robert Eric Shoemaker  
to be released October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2015 in print and digital.**

[www.thoughtcollection.org/30-days-dry](http://www.thoughtcollection.org/30-days-dry)

[www.reshoemaker.com](http://www.reshoemaker.com)

[www.susannewawra.com](http://www.susannewawra.com)

- “30 Days Dry” set for October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2015 release
- First poetry collection published for Chicago’s Robert Eric Shoemaker, theatre artist, and writer
- Illustrated by Susanne Wawra, international visual artist
- 10% of sales goes to support the Howard Brown Health Center’s Recovering With Pride substance use program.
- To schedule a book review, email Eric at [eric@reshoemaker.com](mailto:eric@reshoemaker.com)
- Purchase a copy of “30 Days Dry” in print or digital at Amazon, Kindle, or Magzter: [www.thoughtcollection.org/bookshelf](http://www.thoughtcollection.org/bookshelf)

Chicago, IL, 10.5.2015 – THOUGHT COLLECTION PUBLISHING is proud to announce the publication of 30 DAYS DRY, first poetry collection by ROBERT ERIC SHOEMAKER. The book will be released October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2015, accompanied by events and signings associated with its release.

Events include (among others):

October 9<sup>th</sup> at Armadillo's Pillow in Rogers Park

October 10<sup>th</sup> at Chicago Publisher's Resource in Logan Square

30 DAYS DRY features poetry on the theme of self-betterment and de-contamination of the body and mind. Shoemaker composed the book of 30 poems over the course of one month, while trying to exercise, eat and drink healthily, avoid alcohol, and write. 30 DAYS DRY is illustrated by international artist SUSANNE WAWRA, resident of Ireland. Visit [Thought Collection Publishing](#) or [reshoemaker.com](http://reshoemaker.com) for more information.

Members of the press are encouraged to contact Eric to schedule a review or interview, via email at [eric@reshoemaker.com](mailto:eric@reshoemaker.com), or phone at 270.577.7782.

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With humor and pathos, Robert Eric Shoemaker's first collection "30 Days Dry" delves deeply into many a writer's darkest haven, a rift filled with addictions of harmful and placid varieties. Over the course of a month, the writer's attempts to remain sober and clean of all contaminants demonstrate an on-going internal battle, studded with triumphs and failures, moments of insight and moments of pain. Shoemaker's language brims with the electrical quality of one on the edge, living as best one can under societal and artistic pressures, as well as personal demons. With an understanding that "There's a rhythm; It comes in waves consistent, yet shrinking," Shoemaker's story and poetic voice are empathetic to the plight of multitudes. Sparkling with hope dipped in chaos, "30 Days Dry" proclaims with gusto the possibility of a future free of abuse.

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Reviews of “30 Days Dry”:

“From a Last Night Lucas to an incredible light force blowing out the fuse box, Shoemaker’s poems mischievously question the nature of redemption against the backdrop of Art’s tapestry in a countdown of daily wonders, explosions, and misfit parts. To look up and see “glitter dangled by angels” is to begin in luminous atmosphere, where enchantment exists in gorgeous but penitent song. As amulet against the parched interior, 30 Days Dry wards off temptation with strongly worded texts and letters to a “mirror-me” we all recognize in one another. Round and round we go, cheering for a speaker who can spell out rightful histories in a luxurious aftermath of new grass growing.”

—*Catherine Theis, author of The Fraud of Good Sleep*

“Robert E. Shoemaker funnels you inside the mind of a neurotic narrator only to turn you, the reader, introspective to that person jonesing for what fills, what suffices each day of your loving, clawing existence. Shoemaker’s elegantly distilled style pours each mantra we seek to embody, each special disclaimer on why our day wasn’t perfect into the threaded lines of each piece, and we find kindred soulmates in Shoemaker’s narrator. Like any self-help book addict waiting for the guru to publish the next volume, 30 Days Dry will make you thirst for more.”

—*Jeri Frederickson, Literary Manager at the Irish Theatre of Chicago and Freelance Writer*

“Being an artist myself, I guess I’ll always be partial towards art therapy. I find the process of writing my thoughts down, throwing it all on music, and scribbling my frustrations down on sketchbooks until they become little pieces of art very therapeutic a more effective release of negative energy. Those inclinations were what would later push me to agree to edit “30 Days Dry”, a poetry book by Chicago-based poet and playwright Robert Eric Shoemaker.

“30 Days Dry” is the first entry to Thought Collection Publishing’s 30 Days... Challenge, which encourages literary artists to write about a specific topic or story for thirty consecutive days (I’ll post the link to it below so you can join!). Shoemaker’s entry focuses on the struggles of addiction and seizing the light of sobriety through “self-betterment and de-contamination of the body and mind”.

Documented with piercing accuracy, the healing process is laid out bare through poetry form, the language rigid and offbeat, a trait that mirrors a confused mind, talking about stories like what goes on after a guilty relapse, the poet's inebriated mind making him see a "wide-hipped monster savoring his claws at me-". After going through the last brushes with intoxication, the poet picks up the pieces, later questioning his ethics through subtle dark humour, calling himself that "hypocrite on the other side of the mirror".

What Shoemaker doesn't say through language, he expresses through the structure and overt physicality of his poetry, from the lines repeated over and over again to the point of imbalance ("Jack is a good boy./Round and round"), sprinkling short and blunt poems in between longer ones to the flirtatious way he utilises punctuation (or lack thereof, in some cases), like the sole question mark lingering like a fish hook in the final line of "Day seventeen".

All of this illuminates the character's growing humanity while exercising the writer's finesse with creative writing. Shoemaker squeezes the juice out of his thirty days, ridding himself of the negative energies that consume him until he is ready to challenge the world around him, gaining not only a firmer grip on the ground on which he stands, but on his identity. This is most evident in my personal favourite "Day nineteen (the artistic balance of work and art)", where the writer uses bare and naked language to question the structure of society and its perspective of art, where it stands, and why we should give it the time that we could be using for overtime shifts, eventually leading up to the final line "Why i who has the luxury to make this decision?"

The final poem ends in a positive note with "I can", a phrase that can as well be a useful mantra chanted every morning before stepping out of the front door. It leaves the reader relieved and satisfied knowing that although there isn't any concrete certainty that the narrator will always remain sober, but thanks to the epiphanies and revelations that the narrator has come across with through those thirty days, they are assured that the poet has gained a stronger grip on the ground, and if ever another relapse happens, the bouncing back will be quicker.

"30 Days Dry" also features the gritty and fantastical artwork by Irish artist Susanne Wawra strategically placed around the poems; the crayon-like effect gives out an impression of a child's work, but the actual images themselves combined with that evokes a fittingly haunting vibe."

—*Troy Cabida, author of Lost in London*

“You are blessed to hold in your hands Robert Eric Shoemaker’s vivid and charming first book of poems, composed as a “doctored prescription”: to refrain from boozy spirits, and to instead partake deeply of art making, the impetus for this lucky trade being a genuine display of paternal concern and love delivered in an American chain restaurant. Thus, exchanging blotto for wonderworking, Shoemaker performs the prescriptive ritual as a daily writing practice for the duration of one month in the winter of his first year out of college.

Keenly feeling the clay of the university graduate’s mind thrown into the city’s wheel, Shoemaker’s “post-traumatic blues” generously let life rip up through the shards of ancient academic artifacts, and “gall and dust mingle” in complex arrangements. The ornate shimmers elemental—the elemental radiates ornately, as he implores, “Someone turn off the snow,” and he lives as “an ice cube in the flame of the showerhead.”

In the realm of Shoemaker’s multi-tonal, plural “instants,” the “greens grow like spread seed,” and the poet finds the way—“every step an arrival,” as Levertov wrote—beneath the various shades and arcs of one’s life, the buoyant rainbow in continual and generous burn and shatter to light up the city.”

—*Jessica Savitz, author of Hunting is Painting*

“I’d read more self help books if they represented honest, complicated journeys like this one. Robert Eric Shoemaker’s 30 Days Dry is a book of new consecutive mornings but also a book of mournings. The poetry book is a eulogy of mania, of former habits, of former selves that still might haunt us. He articulates the crazy cat fight within ourselves--claws out, hiss and whiskers, flailing legs. The fight is the frustration between what we “have to do and want to do” and wondering why they can’t be the same things. The fight is about the way creating art feels electrifying and soul-satisfying and the way the author describes creating a burrito simply feels like making a burrito. We melt our brains and shrink ourselves into burrito-making puppets to pay the bills. The frustration is the way art requires so much of ourselves, demands us to put our hearts on a platter, and in this case, there’s no goblet as pacifier, as confidence, as prop.

30 Days Dry is a victory without the victory march. He tells history--his story--as a congratulatory toast made with mere water or white grape juice. No pomp. No fanfare. All truth. He deals with the colorless haze that can come with submission--the gray snow, the smell of dead trees. But most of all, he deals with the type of identity crisis that forces him to look in the mirror and ask which parts of his personality are really him, which blessed-cursed parts will consume the others.

Thanks to clever transitions, each poem connects to the next. The author also connects to his readers and makes us comfortable enough in his world to guess we've felt this way, too. In fact, the strong images and double-words fit with the message and allow readers to project their own meaning and experience onto the poems. Readers may identify with poems in different ways: a vivid description, a perfectly placed phrase, a creative line break, a unique word combination, the echo of purposeful repetition. And yet, filled with all of our vices, we still know that this is his story. We are just peeking into a survival experience that is distinctively his own.

Like the hobos in Starbucks he writes about, Robert Eric Shoemaker might be an undercover prophet. His message can be translated into whatever you need. The message this reader needed to hear is that art still matters. Art makes it bearable for me to put on my "I've got it together" mask and work a 9-5 job. Art also makes me long to take off the mask long enough to reach and risk it all for the kind of transparency I find in this influential book of poetry. "

*—Melissa Kiefer, Writer and Educator*

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#### MORE ABOUT THE ARTISTS:

ROBERT ERIC SHOEMAKER (Poet) is a Chicago based poet-playwright, director, and arts journalist. Eric's poetry has been published with Rollick Magazine, The Chicago After Dark Anthology, and in his book 30 DAYS DRY with Thought Collection publishing. Eric's plays have been seen at Gorilla Tango Theatre, City Lit Theatre, American Theater Company, 3 Brothers Theatre, Mary-Arrchie Theatre Company, and others. He was awarded the 2014 Olga and Paul Menn Foundation Prize for Best Play for his musical PLATH/HUGHES, as well as a 2015 DCASE Individual Artist Program grant from the City of Chicago for his project "LORCA

IN AMERICA”. Eric’s production of PLATH/HUGHES at Gorilla Tango Theatre was lauded by critics for its lyrical originality, immersive quality, and historical accuracy. Upcoming productions include his new adaptation MRS. BERNARDA ALBA with Poetry Is. Productions at Redtwist Theatre. In addition to making theatre, Eric is an arts journalist published in Newcity, Evanston Now, Fra Noi, and the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting. Eric is a graduate with honors from the University of Chicago, where he was Artistic Director of the Classical Entertainment Society. Follow his work at [www.reshoemaker.com](http://www.reshoemaker.com).

SUSANNE WAWRA is a German visual artist and poet based in Dublin, Ireland. Susanne holds a MA in English and Communication & Media from the University of Leipzig, Germany. After an exploration of work life in an international big name company, she decided to swap a secure career for life as an artist. The human condition is a recurring theme in her work. Particularly, she explores identity and Weltschmerz through painting, collage and video. Her work has been exhibited in Ireland and the UK, Germany, Italy and the United States. Even though English is not her mother tongue, it is her preferred medium for poetry. Her first collection “Schizo-Poetry - Fragments of Mind” with co-writer Kevin Nolan was published in May 2015. Recent journal publications include Galway Review, Weyfarers, Valve Journal and Boyne Berries. More info at [www.susannewawra.com](http://www.susannewawra.com).

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#### MORE ABOUT THOUGHT COLLECTION PUBLISHING:

Thought Collection Publishing is an indie publisher supporting social change through our narrative nonfiction publications. 10% of sales from *30 Days Dry* goes to support the Howard Brown Health Center’s Recovering With Pride substance use program. We partner with literary and visual artists to produce collections of stories and art that expand life perspectives. We work with artists who have an open mind to the world's diversity and want to learn, grow, and share their talents with others by contributing in our upcoming and current projects.

Thought Collection Publishing’s 30 Days... series challenges artists to write consecutively for 30 days on a specific area of study, reflection, or expertise. In return they would personally experience something amazing. The manuscripts in the 30 Days... series are all personal

journeys that expand life perspectives. Join the publisher's contact list to stay informed about projects and other books in this series: [eepurl.com/CuL35](http://eepurl.com/CuL35).

KAT LAHR is Founder and Creative Director for Thought Collection Publishing. She enjoys collaborating with other literary and visual artists to collectively bring wisdom, creativity, and social change to the world. Kat currently holds an MBA, is an Adjunct Professor, Researcher, Mom, and Wife.

[www.thoughtcollection.org](http://www.thoughtcollection.org)

**We promote the practice of thinking.**



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