

Press Release

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NYQ Books™ announces the publication of *Waving Mustard in Surrender* by Al Ortolani



September 18, 2014 - New York, NY - NYQ Books™ is proud to announce the publication of *Waving Mustard in Surrender* by Al Ortolani. The poems in Al Ortolani's newest collection, *Waving Mustard in Surrender*, come from the streets of Kansas City and the farm roads of Southeast Kansas. His narratives are as much at home on asphalt as they are in bean fields. The natural world is common to the many facets of this collection. Like birds, his poems fly with striking images—as accessible as crank-pot crows, assassin herons, or starlings startled by cannon shot. There's a good deal of wind and spit, flower and piss in a poetry where tornadoes and baseball are not incongruous to a single summer evening. His characters are tough and smart. They revel in a lingering city decadence and messy small town beauty.

[Kwame Dawes, author of *Duppy Conqueror: New and Selected Poems*](#)

Al Ortolani has given us in *Waving Mustard in Surrender*, a novel's worth of characters, voices, moods and moments offered with tenderness, detail and an indefatigable fascination with the quotidian graces of our lives.

[William Trowbridge, Missouri Poet Laureate, author of *Put This On, Please: New and Selected Poems*](#)

He writes of these masterfully in language that's straightforward in the best sense, none of the current trend toward oblique "difficulty." From lyric to satiric, realistic to surreal, the poems in *Waving Mustard in Surrender* welcome you into a world where the ordinary takes on the luster of the extraordinary and where comedy can cohabit with heartbreak.

[Robert Stewart, Editor, *New Letters*](#)

Al Ortolani writes tough-minded poems of wit and intelligence. Here, a fairytale evolves with the times, as even Hansel and Gretel's witch has user names, street names, like Honey Buns, so we renew with such poems our childhood terrors, loves, and fascinations.

[George Wallace, Writer in Residence, Walt Whitman Birthplace](#)

This book's a poetic river—and I predict you'll emerge from the experience of it as refreshed and fulfilled as a swimmer who has bathed in exquisitely nuanced waters. Straight up, Al Ortolani has given us a book of poetry to cherish, convincing in its quietude, its turbulence and its steady grace.

Al Ortolani was born in Huntington, New York and was raised in Pittsburg, Kansas. Ortolani is a career public school teacher in Kansas. His poetry and reviews have appeared in numerous journals. He has four books of poetry, *The Last Hippie of Camp 50* and *Finding the Edge* (Woodley Press), *Wren's House* (Coal City Press), and *Cooking Chili on the Day of the Dead* (Aldrich Press). He is on the Board of Directors of the Kansas City Writers Place and is an editor with *The Little Balkans Review*. He currently lives in the Kansas City area with his wife Sherri.



photo by Sherri Ortolani

NYQ Books™ was established in 2009 as an imprint of The New York Quarterly Foundation, Inc. Its mission is to augment the *New York Quarterly* poetry magazine by providing an additional venue for poets who are already published in the magazine.