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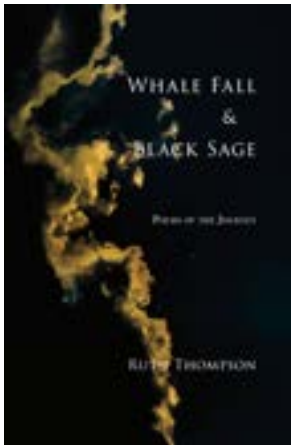
[Saddle Road Press](#) announces a new book of poems by [Ruth Thompson](#):

*Whale Fall & Black Sage: Poems of the Journey*

Publication date: December 21, 2018

\$18. Trade paper. 60 pages. ISBN 9781732952102. Distributed through Ingram.

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At the beginning of *Whale Fall & Black Sage*, “three strange angels” command the poet: *Go down./ Now you must love that too.* She descends into the darkness of whale fall, with its strange creatures both real and imaginary, its song of death and rebirth. Returning to the upper world, her journey becomes more difficult, increasingly revelatory, ultimately transformative. The book ends with a joyous, fully embodied Whitmanesque crow.

In *Whale Fall & Black Sage*, the praise poems of *Here Along Cazenovia Creek* have deepened and become more resonant: “This is the blood/of black sage:/resinous, unfailing.//A leaf crushed/between fingers like this/saves us from desolation.”



**PRAISE FOR *WHALE FALL & BLACK SAGE***

“*Whale Fall & Black Sage* traces the path into our deepest territory, that realm in which there is no separation between darkness and light, between utter undoing and coming into being. These poems are “full of all the voices she can carry” and they hold together both the stern lesson of whale fall, “Go down. / Now you must love that too,” and the crow-companion’s glinting “song of being alive and fine to see.” Their journey is the heroine’s journey, sacred, dark and shining.”

—Diane Gilliam, author of *Kettle Bottom* and *Dreadful Wind & Rain*

“Storyteller, mythmaker and muse, Ruth Thompson uses daring diction and uninhibited voice to create this seamlessly blended two-part world of death, danger, magic and jubilation. What a rich and original metaphor is the re-purposed whale body. What an exuberant song is the woman rising from the imperfect body of self and world. In this bright, witty, and fierce collection, we join the poet as she discovers and celebrates what it means to be alive.”

—Barbara Rockman, author of *Sting and Nest*.

“[These are] wise poems that thread and weave through a mythic mapping of the self. The poems shape a body that travels through light and dark, hunger and nourishment, in order to save the self against isolation and desolation. These poems are, ultimately, about renewal, about following a songline ‘of being alive and fine to see’ in order to find our way home.”

—Maura MacNeil, author of *Lost Houses* and *A History of Water*

“[These] very beautiful poems about Ruths and Whales and Bears and even Minotaurs are prayers we all need, prayers she gives us here in all she sees.”

—Esther Cohen, author of *Breakfast With Allen Ginsberg* and many other books.

## ABOUT RUTH THOMPSON

Ruth Thompson is the author of four books of poetry: *Whale Fall & Black Sage* (2018), *Crazing* (2015), *Woman With Crows* (2012; 2013), and *Here Along Cazenovia Creek* (2011 and 2017).

She returned to writing in her fifties, after freeing herself from an abusive marriage, about which she writes in *Woman With Crows*. Her poems have won *New Millennium Writings*, *Harpur Palate*, *Chautauqua*, and other awards and have been nominated for the Pushcart Prize.

“Whale Fall” has been choreographed and performed by dancers Jenn Eng, Karen Masaki, and Colee Garr. *Here Along Cazenovia Creek* has been choreographed and performed by Shizuno Nasu.

Ruth received a BA from Stanford University and a doctorate in English from Indiana University. In a previous life, she was a college dean in Los Angeles. She now lives in Hilo, Hawai'i, where she teaches writing and meditation and runs a small literary press. She leads writing from the body and writing from nature workshops, both on the Big Island and on the mainland.

Poems, videos of *Whale Fall*, *Dancing the Seasons*, and other performances, and information about upcoming workshops are at [ruththompson.net](http://ruththompson.net).

If you're reading a print version of this press release, and would like an interactive version, or an image of the book's cover, you can find them at

<http://saddleroadpress.com/whale-fall---black-sage.html>

A digital cover image can be downloaded [here](#).

*Whale Fall & Black Sage* is available to all booksellers through the Ingram distribution network. Individuals can purchase a copy at independent bookstores or through any online bookseller. A [Kindle version](#) is available.

## SADDLE ROAD PRESS

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