AE Hines's debut poetry collection, *Any Dumb Animal*, was a finalist for the 2022 Eric Hoffer da Vinci Eye Award and won honorable mention in the 2019 Lena Shull Poetry Contest. She is the 2023 Eastern NC Region Distinguished Poet for the Gilbert-Chappell Distinguished Poets Mentorship Series, a 2013 Pushcart Nominee, and an advisory editor at *The River Poetry*. Her poems can be found in *Salamander Magazine*, *Artemis Journal*, *THEMA*, and elsewhere, including NCLR.

AE Hines's debut collection, *Any Dumb Animal*, received honorable mention in the North Carolina Poetry Society's 2022 Brockman-Campbell Book contest. His poems have been widely published in anthologies and literary journals, including *Armature*, *Main Street Rag*, *North Carolina Miscellany*, and *Feathers Press*, among others. His poems struggle with the complexity of the poet's life as the son of an abusive father. In "How We Learn," which inspired the cover art, Hines describes the physical and psychological abuse he receives from his father, who traumatizes his son by forcing him to face his fear of drowning. The father grabs the boy, drags him down to the pier, and throws him into deep water, so he can learn how to swim and says, "any dumb animal / can learn." The poet returns to animals throughout this collection, identifying with them and their inability to speak.

Starting from the first poem, "Phone Call," when the son comes out to his father as gay, their relationship is broken. The father responds, "Wasn't hard enough on you. I failed." Rejected by his father, the poet finds himself abandoned like a child looking down on the beautiful trees and is dumbstruck, unable to talk at all: "Under Spring Rain." He looks up at the beautiful trees and is overcome with the caring of "beatiﬁed faces," and such beauty takes his breath away. In "I am the young boy / here in this city forest," the poet begins to accept the awkwardness of his childhood forms the foundation of a lake as he attempts to escape drowning. Hines grew up in North Carolina, and his childhood forms the foundation for these engaging, well-crafted poems struggling with the complexity of the poet's life as the son of an abusive father.

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