NECK OF THE WOODS
AMY WOOLARD ’08
ALICE JAMES BOOKS

“Neck of the Woods,” the debut poetry collection by Amy Woolard ’08, is a hero-quest deep inside the mythos of the American South, wandering through childhood stories in which a girl alone must work to save herself,” according to her publisher.

The writing was heavily inspired by the loss of a close friend of Woolard’s to suicide. Part elegy, part survivor’s testimony, “Neck of the Woods” was published this year after winning the 2018 Alice James Award.

Fantastical imagery, such as that from the “The Wizard of Oz,” is integral to the poetry’s visual landscape.

“Using the tropes and scaffolding of fairy tales and childhood stories helped me talk about my path through this grief in a way that I hope helps it become more than just narrative,” she told the Southern Review of Books.

The book has earned favorable reviews for Woolard, an attorney and policy coordinator for the Legal Aid Justice Center in Charlottesville. In her day job, she represents indigent children in education, foster care and juvenile court matters.

“Woolard’s writing is full of memorable juxtapositions and turns of phrase, among them: ‘I was asked to show up with a side-dish. I made / A slaw of my longing’ and ‘whiskey moves through me like / it’s checking me for ticks.’” reads a Publisher’s Weekly write-up.

“Woolard is a graduate of the Iowa Writers’ Workshop. Her poems have appeared in The New Yorker, Ploughshares and The Paris Review, and in the Best New Poets 2013 and 2015 anthologies, among other publications.

She has received fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Vermont Studio Center and the Breadloaf Writers’ Conference.

In addition, she is an essayist and reporter. Virginia Quarterly Review awarded her the Stage D. Blackford Prize for Nonfiction in 2016.

—Eric Williamson
PRESENCE IN CHAOS
365 Mindful Moments
DEBRA SABATINI HENNELLY ’98

A collection of thought-provoking quotes illustrated with the author's original photography. “Presence in Chaos” is the product of Hennelly's focus on finding mindfulness through creativity. This book is laid out in a quote-a-day format, intended to inspire taking a little time each day to be present “in the moment,” helping to focus on building resilience amid the chaos that can come with our day-to-day lives.

For Hennelly, “like so many in middle-age reflection, life feels like a blur since her 20s—juggling all the commitments in her work and in raising a family—sometimes chaotic, sometimes just plain exhausting. Some of it was self-imposed; some of it came with the territory of working in law firms and corporate-land, surrounded by high-achievers and soccer moms.”

She said the book was an attempt to “reset” herself to avoid burnout: “Put on your own oxygen mask before assisting the person next to you, right?”

DAMON RUNYON ON THE 1920 PRESIDENTIAL CONVENTIONS
27 Newspaper Columns about the Republican and Democratic National Conventions of 1920 by Damon Runyon

EDITED BY NICHOLAS KESLER ’99
KINDLE PUBLISHING

Damon Runyon, best known today for authoring the short stories behind “Guys and Dolls” and other fiction, is also remembered as a journalist who wrote about sports and politics. As a prominent newspaper writer in 1920, he covered that year’s Republican and Democratic conventions.

This book is a collection of 27 newspaper columns written by Runyon about the conventions, published between June 6 and July 11, 1920—including commentary before and after each convention, and a series of observations made between conventions.

THE INNER WORK OF RACIAL JUSTICE
Healing Ourselves and Transforming Our Communities Through Mindfulness
RHONDA V. MAGEE ’93

STUCK INSIDE
Memoirs of a Shy Guy
JAMES P. MONACELL ’78

UNHOLY
Why White Evangelicals Worship at the Altar of Donald Trump
SARAH POSNER ’90
RANDOM HOUSE

Posner, who has been covering the religious right for decades, sets out to answer the question posed by her book’s title. According to her publisher, Random House, “Posner digs deep into the realm of the historical grounds of the religious right to reveal how issues of race and xenophobia have always been at the movement’s core and how religion often cloak anxiety about perceived threats to a white Christian America.”

FALL 2020 UVA LAWYER 101