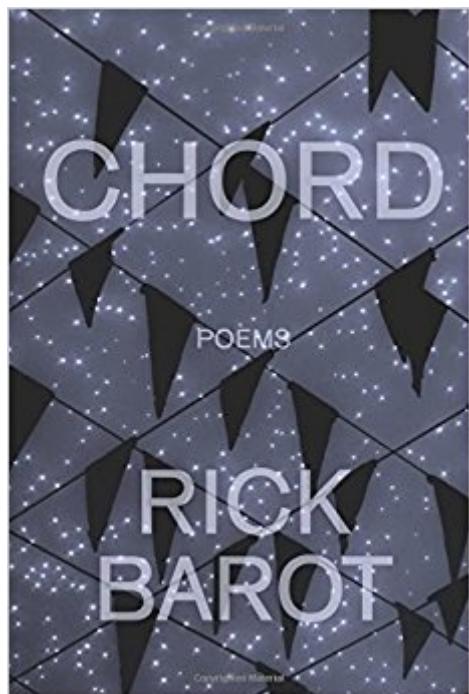


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# Chord



## Synopsis

That art should once have been marked with this delicacy: always only one of each thing made, so that your poem has its one life on the sheet you have chosen for it, or the snapshot of the birthday party, everything in the room upended by the children's jubilation, survives only in the single defended piece of glass. Rick Barot was born in the Philippines, and received his MFA from the Iowa Writers' Workshop. He is the author of *The Darker Fall and Want* and teaches at the MFA Program for Writers at Warren Wilson College.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Winner of the PEN Open Book Award Winner of the UNT Rilke Prize Winner of the Publishing Triangle's Thom Gunn Award for Gay Poetry Shortlisted for the LA Times Book Prize "At his best, Barot seamlessly weaves history, image, and etymology in ways that offer the reader new eyes to see language and the world it describes....Barot's poems transfix and transform through his remarkable ability to pack and unpack narratives within the space of an image." Publishers Weekly, starred review "Rick Barot's careful, moving third collection...commemorates his grandmother, remembers his family's roots in the Philippines, considers his years in the Bay Area and in Tacoma, Wash. (where he lives now), all in the added harsh light of public history.... Here as in both his previous books, Barot's lines ask that we read them slowly, that we ask how he came to write them, how he can keep distressing the canvas/ of the personal....[A] poet we can trust." The San Francisco Chronicle "These poems are entranced by the intricacies of

the mind, the mystery of its remarkable durability and frailty. Chord also involves a subtle yet consistent consideration of (white, male, heteronormative) cultural privilege and colonialism.... Chord brings us into a nuanced understanding of how we construct the world with our minds: "You don't have to understand it / but you will carry it anyway."<sup>1</sup> Boston Review "Chord is a book and Rick Barot a poet to recommend to all readers<sup>2</sup>; Rick Barot's poems are scrupulous and patient; his language is accessible and precise, creating vivid imagery and syntax that is supple and incisive, initiating the reader into thoughtful meditation as well as tender and fierce questioning<sup>3</sup>. Here is a poet who revels in all the potential around him, searching for, questioning, and finding meaning through astute observation and a facility with reading the world. Barot excels in rendering associative leaps<sup>4</sup>; bringing together the personal and historical, the banal and sublime<sup>5</sup>; with a precision that might be a stretch for poets less fastidious and patient. In Barot's hands, these distances become tensile strength, with smart and surprising juxtaposition<sup>6</sup>. These poems deliver, ringing notes that linger and sing."<sup>7</sup> International Examiner "Chord is the capstone of a provocative trilogy. We can only hope it becomes the tenor in a forthcoming quartet. Where might we travel next, stylistically and thematically, with Barot's speaker? The last poem is awash in beginnings, a glissando of "the beginning of, the beginning of, the beginning of, the beginning of."<sup>8</sup> A book called Origin perhaps? A book called New Rain? Whatever the title, know that I want it already."<sup>9</sup> Lambda Literary "Much of the joy in reading these poems comes from following Barot as he moves gracefully between the concrete and the conceptual<sup>10</sup>; The erudition and sensitivity of these poems is a welcome respite from this year's stupidity blues. For all the craft on display in Chord, you may feel like you're having a thrilling conversation with a smart friend."<sup>11</sup> The Common "[Barot's] ear is keen, and he isn't a poet who's shy of shaping subtly rich sound texture<sup>12</sup>; It's a challenging balance to maintain this commentary on poetics and aesthetics over the course of the collection, and Barot pulls it off, a testimony to his control, sure, but also his sensitivity to the importance of never slipping into bombast, never letting the language become mere speaking about the world. His speaker's fluidity moving between rhetoric and image, commentary and metaphor, flat statement and rich music illustrate his skill in modulating voice."<sup>13</sup> Poetry Northwest "The elements of craft<sup>14</sup>; syntax, image, story, and the like<sup>15</sup>; become a system of conscious plot points throughout Chord, and Barot's approachable expository style reinforces this in the way all truly great teachers do. This is a book that will appeal to readers' intellectual curiosity as well as their emotions."<sup>16</sup> NewPages "The poems in Rick Barot's third collection, Chord, complicate and expand each other: the speakers' memories and experiences quickly ripple out into the

historical, global, and political....Throughout, Chord posits the lyric as a form of excavation, or disinterring, unraveling personal and global history into collective memory. Barotâ™s poems move forward to go backward, in search of some primeval, primary state; as his speaker says in the end, "I want from love only the beginning." •Scout: Poetry in Review"Through Barotâ™s imaginative renderings and the complex psychologies they reveal, the quotidian becomes new, even bizarre, even sublime"; Barotâ™s gift to us isn't merely the poems...but the charged silence after they end." Hyphen Magazine"Rick Barotâ™s poems are assured, finely composed structures in which memory and emotion often take startling, deeply moving turns. "Ploughshares

Rick Barot was born in the Philippines, grew up in the San Francisco Bay Area, and received his MFA from the The Writersâ™ Workshop at the University of Iowa. He is the author of The Darker Fall and Want and teaches at the MFA Program for Writers at Warren Wilson College.

Rick Barot is a superstar poet. One of those rare elegant writers who crafts meaningful poetry for the ages.

Quiet, whispers of poems. Meaningful. Certainly not effortless, but indeed, elegant.

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