

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Miami, Florida

PROPOSAL FOR CREATIVE THESIS

THE FIVE DOLLAR SHIRT

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THE FIVE DOLLAR SHIRT is a collection of poems that explores the connection between the author's experiences working and living in South Asia, Chicago, and South Florida; the phenomenon of global capitalism; and the formative influences of place and culture, both while living in a foreign place and upon returning home.

THE FIVE DOLLAR SHIRT incorporates longer free-verse narratives, shorter lyrical meditations on the associations of specific images, and formal work that incorporates both impulses while suggesting new possibilities that evolve from working within an inherited structure. THE FIVE DOLLAR SHIRT rejects the ironic ambivalence of one strain of contemporary American poetry, in favor of ardent post-romantic engagement.

THE FIVE DOLLAR SHIRT is organized into three sections that loosely follow the chronology of the author's life. The first section, "Middle West," deals with the author's efforts to understand the values, traditions, and eccentricities of the region and culture into which he was born. In this section, Chicago becomes a resonating center of the collection, an adopted home for the author, and an embodiment of the nuances of contemporary American culture. The second section, "Far East," reckons with individual culpability regarding the exploitation of foreign aid and labor within developing economies (specifically Bangladesh and India) by global corporations and superpowers; this section is the most lyrical and speculative of the collection. The final section, "Deep South," is the most immediately personal, seeking out the ground where good intentions become subsumed within everyday compromises.

THE FIVE DOLLAR SHIRT is ultimately an effort to accommodate seemingly conflicting impulses into an ethical worldview: rootlessness and family, ambition and compassion, progress and conservation.