

George F. Thompson Publishing, L.L.C.  
217 Oak Ridge Circle  
Staunton, VA 24401-3511, U.S.A.  
www.gftbooks.com

BOOK INFORMATION SHEET (5.21.20)

**Authors (as it should appear on the book):** John Willis, Robin Behn, and Matan Rubinstein

**Title:** *Requiem for the Innocent*

**Subtitle:** *El Paso and Beyond*

**Contributors:** Photographs by John Willis, text by Robin Behn, and music by Matan Rubinstein

**Partner:** Published in association with the Center for the Study of Place

**Book pages:** 64

**Number and type of illustrations:** 23 color photos by John Willis

**Trim size:** 8.0" x 10.0" portrait/upright

**List price:** \$25.00

**Discount:** short (25%), but special (trade) discounts are available for nonreturnable bulk purchases

**ISBN (book):** 978-1-938086-79-3

**ISBNs (electronic):**

**Edition:** Paperback with gatefold flaps

**E-book?** yes

**Interactive e-book?** Hopefully yes, so Matan's music can be heard and, hopefully, Shannon Hummel's dances can be viewed.

**Jacket:** no

**Edition size:** 1,000

**Publication date:** September 1, 2020

**Advances due:** August 1, 2020

**To warehouse:** August 15, 2020

**Printed in:** Singapore

**Distributor:** Casemate/IPM

**Bookstore categories (list three):** Photography/Poetry/Current Events

**Audience:** Anyone at any age who has been affected by mass shootings, in America especially, not only in El Paso but also at Columbine, Dayton, Las Vegas, Orlando, Parkland, Pittsburgh, Sandy Hook, Christchurch in New Zealand, Oslo and Utøya in Norway, and Korat in Thailand.

**Selling points (list three):** (1) This book is a powerful memorial not only to the twenty-two innocents who lost their lives and the twenty-seven who were injured at the mass shooting in El Paso, but to all who have been killed and injured from mass shootings everywhere; (2) this is a powerful collaborative artistic achievement between well-known photographer John Willis, well-known poet Robin Behn, and well-known musician Matan

Rubinstein; and (3) all royalties earned from the sale of the book and all special collections received at the accompanying traveling exhibition will be donated to the families of those who died and were injured in El Paso. **Tagline:** A provocative and somber tribute to those who lost their lives and were injured in the mass shooting in El Paso.

### **Description of the work:**

On Saturday morning, August 3, 2019, a twenty-one-year-old self-declared white supremacist from Allen, Texas, targeted “Mexicans” in a hate crime and shot and killed twenty-three people who were shopping at the Cielo Vista Walmart (Supercenter #512) in El Paso. Among the dead were fourteen Americans, eight Mexicans from nearby Ciudad Juarez, and one German. Another twenty-six were injured. It was the seventh-deadliest mass shooting in the United States since 1949 and the deadliest attack on Hispanic and Latina/o Americans in U.S. history.

This book and the traveling exhibition and performances that accompany it are meant to honor the memory of the twenty-three innocent souls who lost their lives and to be mindful of the twenty-six others who were injured. The book, exhibition, and performances also honor and remind us of the countless others who have suffered—and continue to suffer—from hate and violence in any form, including those murdered and affected by mass shootings in Annapolis, Austin, Blacksburg, Charleston, Columbine, Dayton, Fort Hood, Knoxville, Las Vegas, Midland/Odessa, Milwaukee, Orlando, Parkland, Pittsburgh, Sandy Hook, Springfield, and Virginia Beach in the U.S.A. and Port Arthur in Tasmania, Paris in France, Oslo and Utøya in Norway, Christchurch in New Zealand, Korat in Thailand, Hanau in Germany, Nova Scotia in Canada, and too many other places to list.

*Requiem for the Innocent: El Paso and Beyond* is a creative collaboration between photographer John Willis, poet Robin Behn, and musician Matan Rubinstein. The work of choreographer Shannon Hummel will also be featured in the traveling exhibition. All royalties earned from the sale of the book are being donated to the families of those who died and were injured on that fateful day in El Paso.

### **Blurbs:**

“Photographer John Willis and poet Robin Behn have created a remarkable body of work documenting spontaneous expressions of grief following a mass shooting. Willis focuses his lens on the profusion of floral tributes left in the parking lot outside the El Paso Walmart where twenty-two people were gunned down, combining great documentary photography with internal, pictorial logic and materiality. Behn’s text amplifies Willis’s tone while probing the circumstances that leave a “time-stripped, stammering void” in their wake. Her lines document the splintered narrative of the day alongside mass shooting facts, the language of gun violence, and the ongoing pain and surreality of life for the wounded. Also included is a link to exquisite, haunting “Micro-Requiems,” music by Matan Rubinstein written for the series. The totality offers a portrait of the

wounded heart of a community.

—Mara Williams, Chief Curator, Brattleboro Museum & Art Center, Vermont

“Immensely moving for its selection of suggestive fragments, this hybrid book manages to challenge the ‘mass’ implicit in ‘mass shootings’ as it honors each lost life and minute details of some of the countless bouquets offered in tribute. The cumulative effect of the photographs, music, and evocative, experimental poems is nothing less than fierce—the book pushes back, it refuses to turn away, it imprints intractable flaws in our culture but does so by offering us nothing less than beauty on each of its pages, creating an exquisite fabric that challenges the power of the bullet.”

—Leslie Ullman, Founder of the bilingual M.F.A. in Creative Writing Program and Professor Emerita at the University of Texas at El Paso, M.F.A. faculty member at Vermont College of Fine Arts, and author of *Progress on the Subject of Immensity*

“John Willis’s photographs are irresistible in a dark, sad way, for what he reveals in the aftermath of the massacre in El Paso are images that are all too familiar to us now: factory flowers, flowers that are weepy and dead, flowers shrouded in plastic wraps, many still showing SKU labels. Like manufactured condolence cards, their manifest expression of grief is prosaic. They suggest the inadequacy and futility of such gestures.

“Robin Behn’s accompanying text feeds off the images and speaks to why the flowers that Willis photographed are even on the ground in the first place: another shooting in a gun-obsessed, out of balance nation where innocent people are randomly fired on with military-grade automatic weapons. Integrated as they are on facing pages, the photographs and text are a powerful reminder of the mass destruction.

“While Behn’s text is riveting in its assertive assembly of messages and facts, Willis’s photographs are, at their core, profoundly beautiful. They eschew sentimentality, transcending their stated purpose of mourning. Like a requiem, the images invite us to explore deeper emotions associated with loss.”

—Stephen Westheimer, J.D.

“*Requiem for the Innocent* hauntingly intertwines photography, poetry, and music by three accomplished artists to honor those killed and injured in El Paso and to evoke our mourning without reinforcing the violence. This unforgettable presentation asks us to not allow it to happen again.”

—Ellen McCullough-Lovell, President of Marlboro College (2004–2015), Deputy Chief-of-Staff to First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, and Chief-of-Staff to U.S. Senator Patrick Leahy (1983–1994)

### **About the Authors:**

*John Willis* is Professor of Photography Emeritus at Marlboro College and a co-founder of the In-Sight Photography Project and Exposures Cross Cultural Youth Photography Program. He was awarded a John Simon

Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship in Photography in 2010. His photographs are in more than sixty collections, including the Amon Carter Museum, Center for Creative Photography, George Eastman House International Museum of Photography and Film, J. Paul Getty Museum, Heard Museum, High Museum of Art, Library of Congress, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, National Gallery of Art, National Museum of the American Indian, Nelson-Adkins Museum of Art, Princeton University Art Museum, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, Whitney Museum of American Art, and Yale University Gallery of Art. His other books are *Mni Wiconi / Water Is Life: Honoring the Water Protectors at Standing Rock and Everywhere in the Ongoing Struggle for Indigenous Sovereignty* (George F. Thompson Publishing, 2019), *Views from the Reservation: A New Edition* (George F. Thompson Publishing, 2019), and *Recycled Realities*, a collaborative effort with photographer Tom Young (Center for American Places, 2006).

*Robin Behn* is a poet and Professor of English the University of Alabama, where she teaches in the M.F.A. Program in Creative Writing. She was awarded a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship in Poetry in 1999 and has received grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the state arts councils of Alabama and Illinois. Behn is the author of five volumes of poems, most recently *Quarry Cross* (Madhat Press, 2018), and two chapbooks. She is co-editor of *The Practice of Poetry: Writing Exercises from Poets Who Teach* (William Morrow, 1992) and editor of a book for young writers forthcoming from the University of Alabama Press, *Once Upon a Time in the Twenty-First Century: Unexpected Exercises in Creative Writing*.

*Matan Rubinstein*, is a composer/improviser and electronic musician who is active across a wide range of contemporary music making. He has been a professor of music at Marlboro College since 2011. He has composed works for chamber groups, orchestra and jazz orchestras, as well as for dance, film, television, and interactive media. He is also a performer and has made several recordings, including *Sada* (2012) and *Soundtracks and a String Quartet* (2010). His most recent project, the Marlboro Slipstream Group, a quartet of composer/performers, is an Ensemble-in-Residence at Marlboro College.