

# OAKLAND SIDE WALK POETRY PROGRAM

AN **OBID** PROJECT

*Embedding the power of art  
into everyday spaces*

*With generous support from*

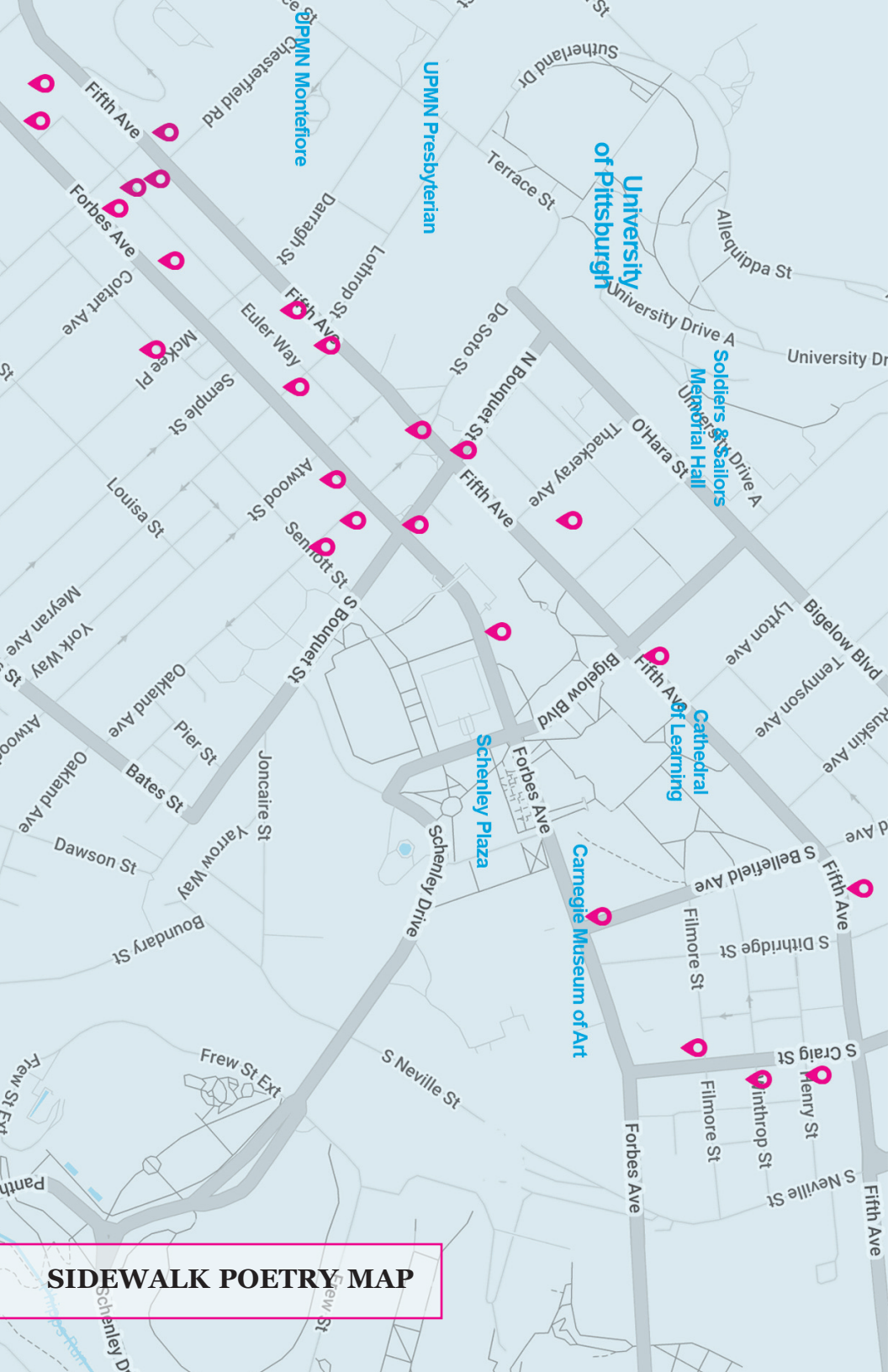


OAKLAND  
BUSINESS  
IMPROVEMENT  
DISTRICT

**UPMC**  
LIFE CHANGING MEDICINE



University of  
Pittsburgh



**SIDEWALK POETRY MAP**



## *Introduction*

The 2022 Oakland Sidewalk Poetry Program is an interactive public art project that features poetry that celebrates Oakland's past, present, and future. The poems were chosen in a contest that included a review and blind selection by a panel of jurors representing Oakland residents and local universities, including the University of Pittsburgh, CMU, and Carlow. OBID received 82 original poems by nearly 60 people who live, work, study or have other connections to the Oakland area. Winners of the contest received a \$100 award and their poems now appear on sidewalks throughout Oakland.

The poems attempt to bring life to often overlooked areas. "Sidewalk poetry embeds the power of art into our everyday spaces" said Cate Irvin, Director of Placemaking & Activation for OBID. "Especially during the pandemic, our sidewalks have become critical spaces for contemplation, fresh air, and socializing. Sidewalk poetry uplifts these important spaces."

2022 was OBID's first annual Sidewalk Poetry Contest to celebrate April as National Poetry Month, inspired by artist Marcus Young with Public Art Saint Paul in St. Paul, Minnesota. Sidewalk poetry has spread to other cities across the country to honor the intersection between poetry and place. The 26 selected poems that are painted on the sidewalks of Oakland and will be removed once they begin to fade, and shuffled around to new locations as time goes on.

# Special Thanks

## Poetry Committee Members

### **Louis J. Boyle, PhD**

Chair, Dept. of Art, Communication and English  
Professor of English  
Carlow University

### **Amy J Bowman-McElhone, PhD**

Program Director, Art  
Director, Carlow University Art Gallery  
Assistant Professor in Art History & Curatorial Studies  
Contemporary Art, Critical Theory, Museal Practice and Theory, and  
Art in Public Spaces  
Carlow University

### **Cate Irvin, MPH**

Director of Placemaking  
Oakland Business Improvement District

### **Kit Ayers**

Director of the Center for Creativity  
University of Pittsburgh

### **Erik Schuckers**

Manager of Communications and Programming, Center for Creativity  
University of Pittsburgh

### **Lisa Kay Schweyer, MPM & TDM-CP®**

Program Manager, Traffic21 Institute, and Mobility21 National  
University Transportation Center  
Carnegie Mellon University

### **Jake Oresick**

President, Board of Directors, Oakland Planning and Development  
Attorney, Houston Harbaugh, P.C.

## Block by Block Street Team

### **William Thomas, Operations Manager, Block by Block**

Cleaning Ambassadors

**Carlos Velazquez**

**Stewart Schley**

**Herman Blue**

Hilton Garden Inn Pittsburgh University Place

Carlow University

University of Pittsburgh

Carnegie Mellon University

All Oakland business and property owners who participated in the program



## *Poets*

Phyliss Anderson  
Rho Bloom-Wang  
Kira Brice  
Kathy Chenot  
Tylar Farmer  
Erica Hom  
Lisa Kay Schweyer  
Lily Keener  
Danielle Kelley  
Susan Kochman  
Laura Lind  
Robert Lonie  
Jessica Manack  
Sarah McMullen  
Alexander Miller  
Gabrielle Noye  
Michael Pastorkovich  
Shannon Valenti  
Lily Rouleau  
Jonathan Rubin  
Ziva Schmitt  
Clara Weibel

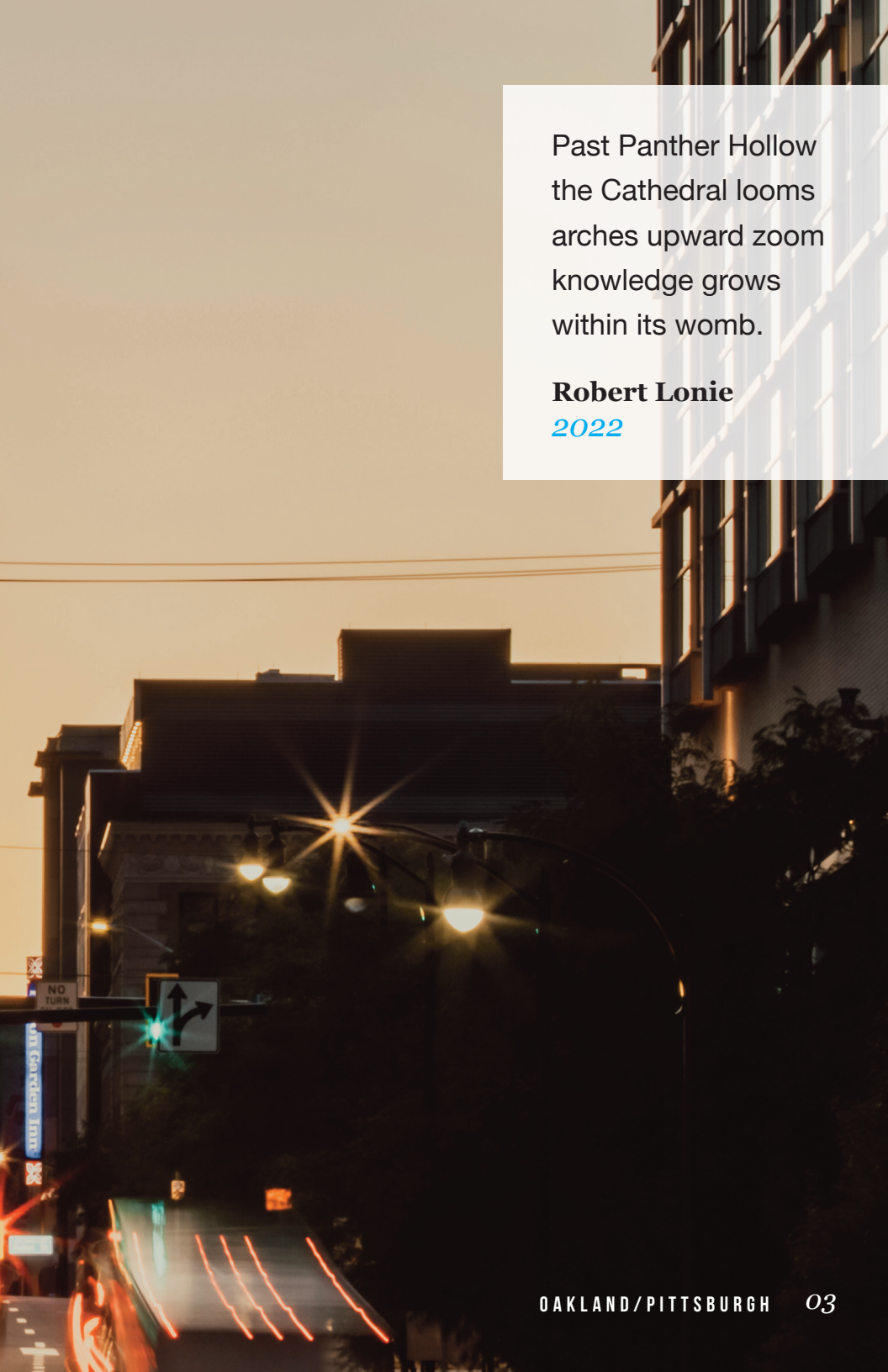


## Out-of-State

The first time  
I came to Pittsburgh  
was the day I moved into a dorm.  
Looking down Forbes at  
all the people and the Cathedral  
I'd never been so intimidated  
but now Oakland is home.

**Lily Rouleau**  
2022





Past Panther Hollow  
the Cathedral looms  
arches upward zoom  
knowledge grows  
within its womb.

**Robert Lonie**  
*2022*



## The Romance of Falco Peregrinus

Flirtatious aerial acrobatics  
Nightly Forbes Avenue pigeon feasts  
Matching Steeler fan faces  
Domestic upkeep of their Cathedral love nest  
The perfect Pittsburgh pair

**Kathy Cherot**  
*2022*

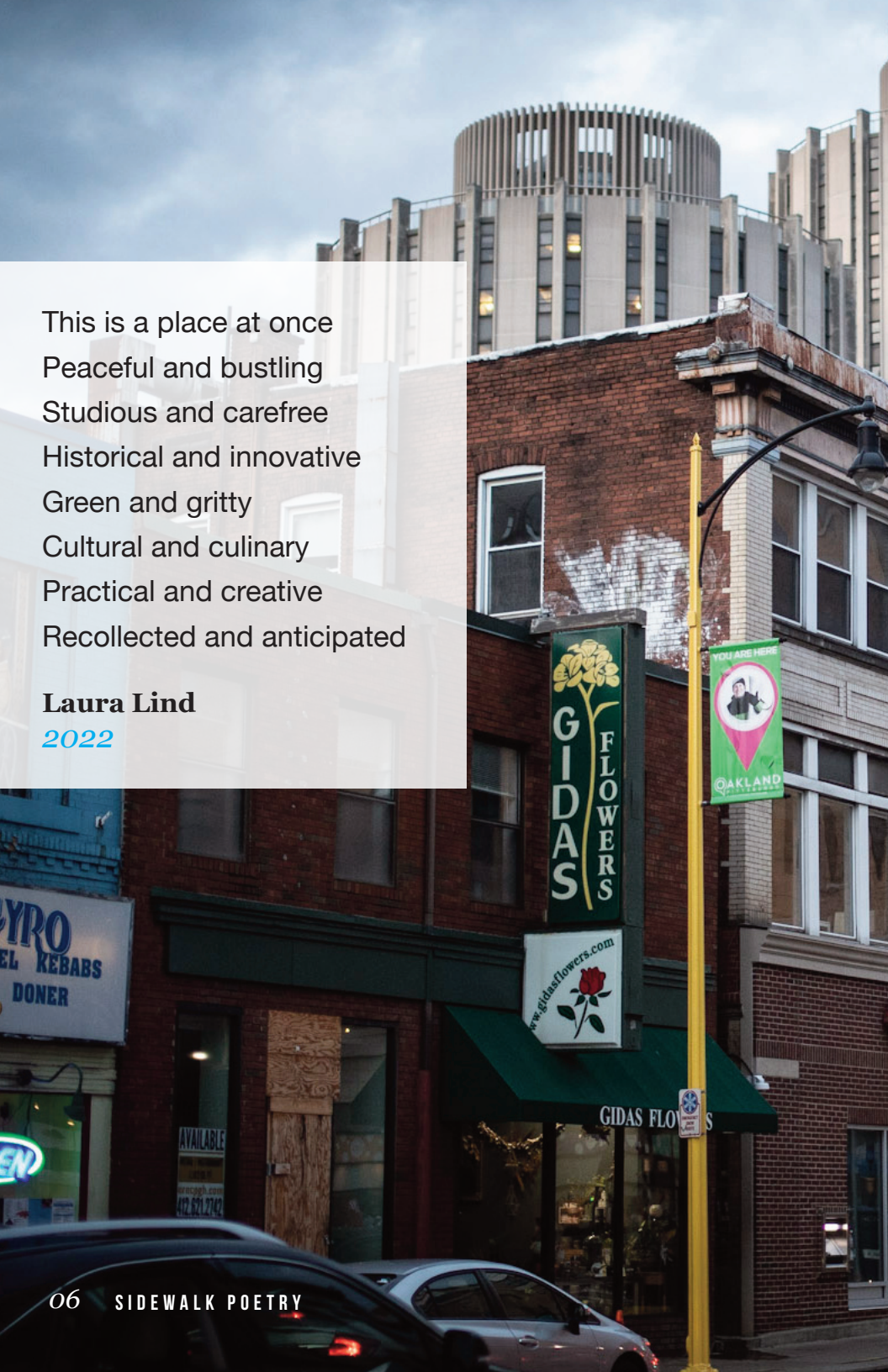




## Oakland

Oakland, we found a home within  
your concrete towers, our noses  
nestled in Russian poetry and  
stacks of Victorian literature.  
Library nights, burnt coffee,  
plates of greasy fries, shared  
with new friends we chose  
as family.

**Erica Hom**  
**2022**



This is a place at once  
Peaceful and bustling  
Studious and carefree  
Historical and innovative  
Green and gritty  
Cultural and culinary  
Practical and creative  
Recollected and anticipated

**Laura Lind**  
*2022*

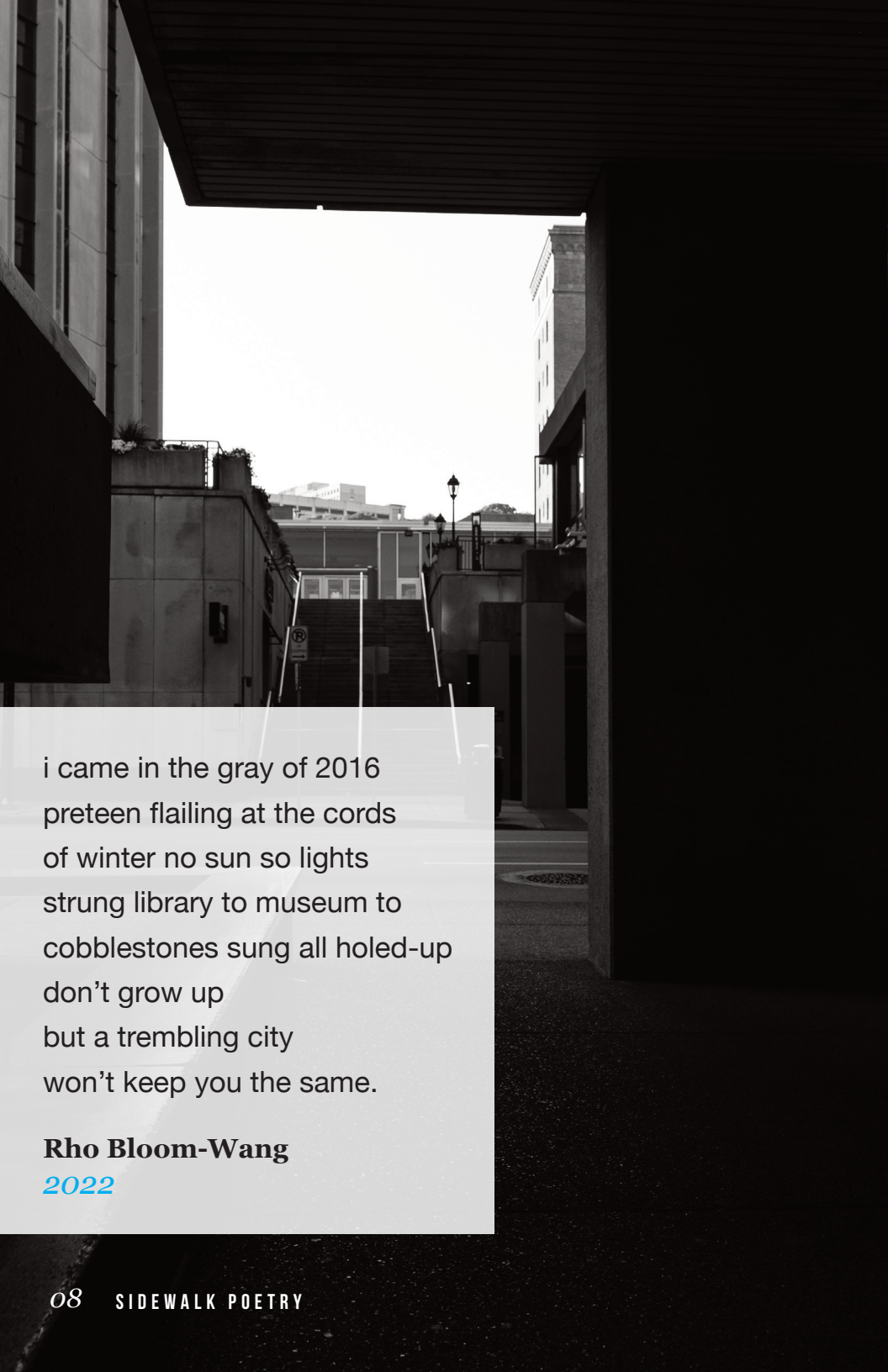




## A Week of Wags

Through the Hollow on Monday  
Tuesday in Schenley Park  
A good rest on Wednesday  
Cause Thursday all I do is bark  
Friday I frolic around Frick  
Saturday I chase the 61 to Penn  
And on Sunday...I do it all again!

**Clara Weibel**  
*2022*



i came in the gray of 2016  
preteen flailing at the cords  
of winter no sun so lights  
strung library to museum to  
cobblestones sung all holed-up  
don't grow up  
but a trembling city  
won't keep you the same.

**Rho Bloom-Wang**  
*2022*





## Oakland Pulse

Thump thump

Feet on the concrete

The pulse of timeless advance

Thump thump

Arteries of nature and knowledge


The rhythm and force of progress

Thump thump

**Sarah McMullen**

*2022*

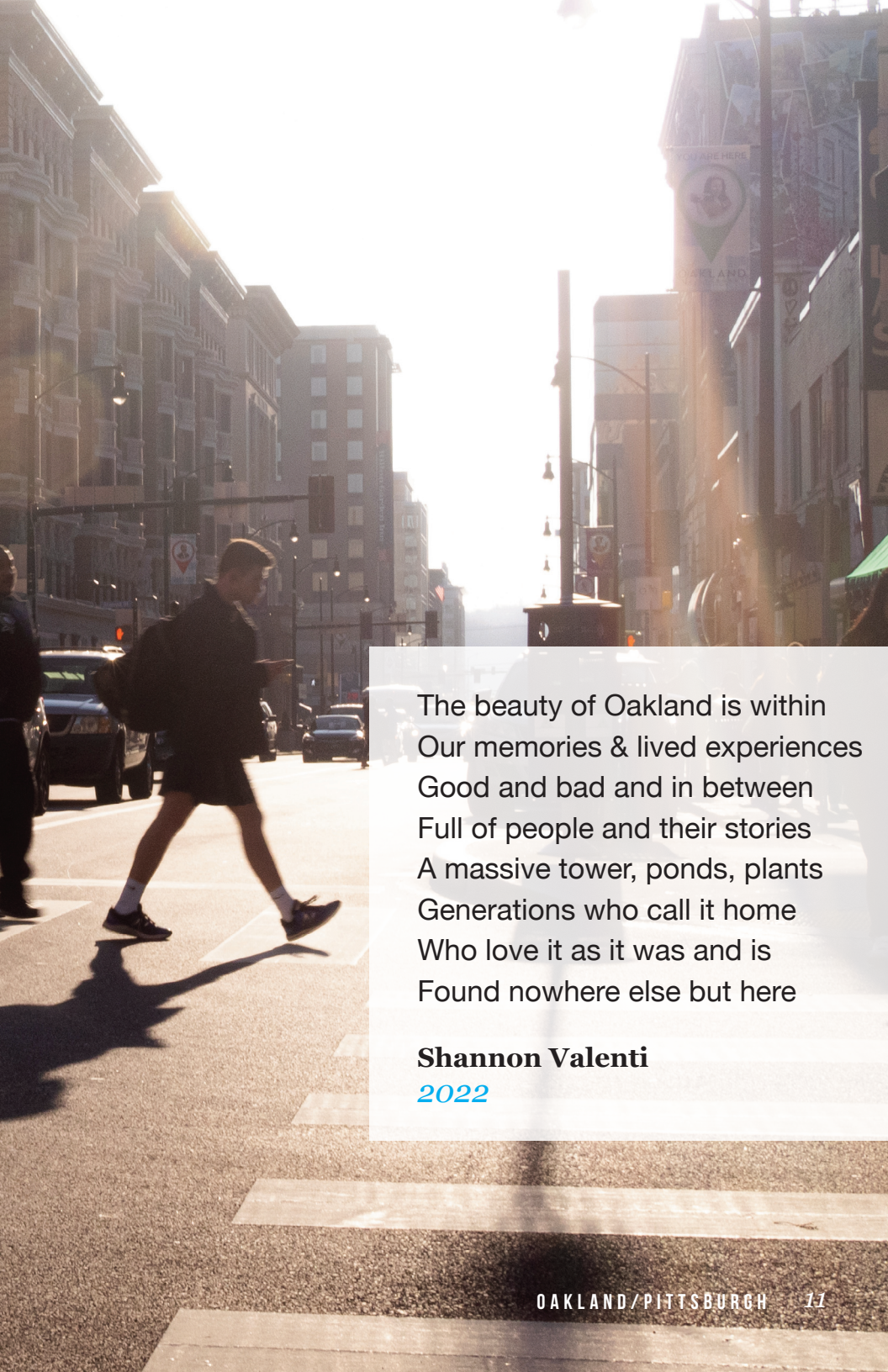


A photograph of a city street in Oakland, California, during the day. The scene is captured from a low angle, showing a crosswalk in the foreground. A silver SUV is stopped at the crosswalk, and a white pickup truck is visible behind it. In the background, there are multi-story brick buildings. A McDonald's sign is visible on one of the buildings. A street sign with a person's face and the text "YOU ARE HERE" is also visible. The lighting suggests it's either early morning or late afternoon, with long shadows cast across the street.

Strolling down the street in Oakland,  
Strangers feel like friends, offer their hand  
Sunshine in the sky,  
Fresh water nearby.  
Kindness and Empathy,  
It's what we need  
strolling down the street in Oakland

**Danielle Kelley**  
*2022*



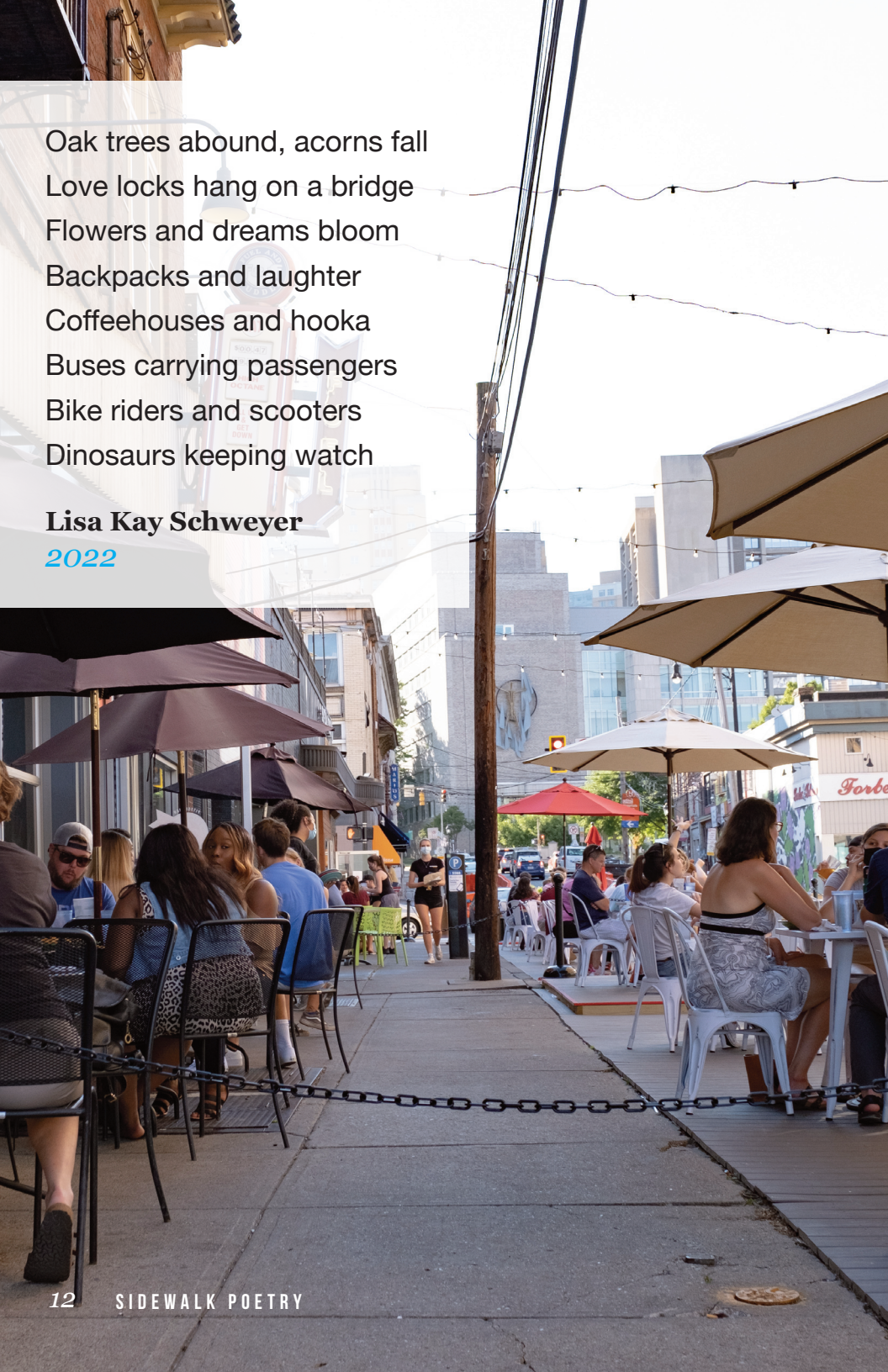


The beauty of Oakland is within  
Our memories & lived experiences  
Good and bad and in between  
Full of people and their stories  
A massive tower, ponds, plants  
Generations who call it home  
Who love it as it was and is  
Found nowhere else but here

**Shannon Valenti**

**2022**





Oak trees abound, acorns fall  
Love locks hang on a bridge  
Flowers and dreams bloom  
Backpacks and laughter  
Coffeehouses and hooka  
Buses carrying passengers  
Bike riders and scooters  
Dinosaurs keeping watch

**Lisa Kay Schweyer**

*2022*



An aerial night photograph of a city, likely Oakland and Pittsburgh, showing a dense urban landscape with numerous illuminated buildings and streets. A prominent road, Forbes Avenue, runs vertically through the center of the image, with light trails from cars. In the foreground, two tall, cylindrical skyscrapers are visible. The background shows a hilly area with scattered lights under a twilight sky.

Haiku 1977

Forbes Ave.& Meyran  
Sonny Daye's Stage Door  
Spirits of jazz bless our streets.

**Michael Pastorkovich**  
2022



## A Day Trip or a Transplant


Carnegie Museums have art  
and dinosaur bones for a start.  
For a lovely day trip,  
See the flowers at Phipps.  
Oakland can move or replace your heart!

**Susan Kochman**

2022



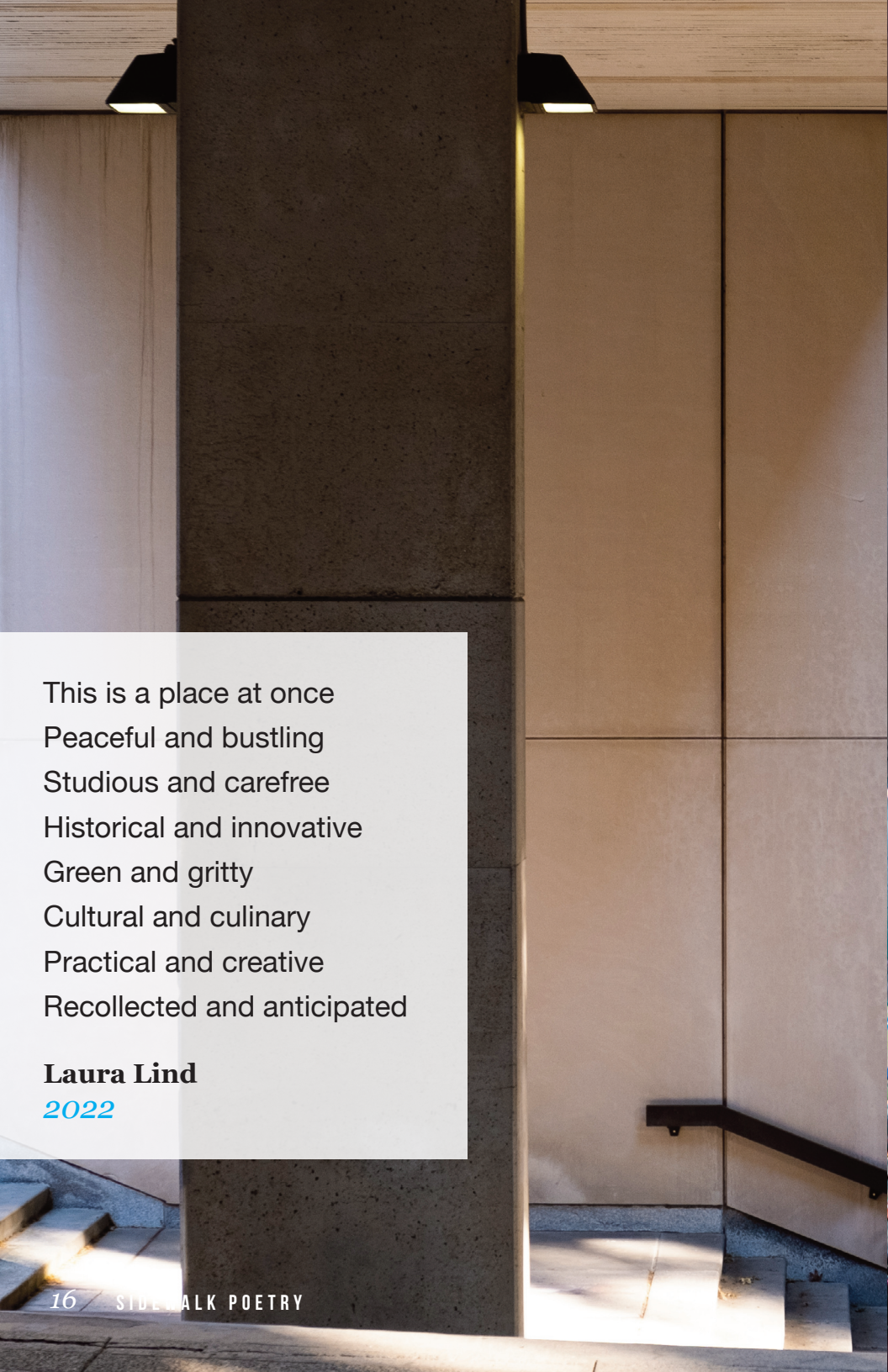




Here, I can be anywhere:  
Within walls of Monet and Dalí,  
Halls of towering dinosaurs,  
Lush tropical gardens,  
Mazes of book-packed shelves,  
Classrooms of Norway and China,  
Schenley's vibrant woods.  
Here, the world is mine.

**Laura Lind**  
*2022*





This is a place at once  
Peaceful and bustling  
Studious and carefree  
Historical and innovative  
Green and gritty  
Cultural and culinary  
Practical and creative  
Recollected and anticipated

**Laura Lind**  
*2022*



## Ancestral Chatter


Haiku:

The steel town gives birth  
tiny dancing diamonds bright  
whispers at midnight

**Gabrielle Noye**

*2012*



A photograph of a city street scene in Oakland, California. In the background, there are multi-story buildings. One building has a blue facade with white window frames. Another building is white with large windows. A sign for 'CHIKN' is visible on a building. A 'FedEx Office' sign is also present. A street sign on a pole reads 'YOU ARE HERE' with a map of Oakland and a pin. In the foreground, several people are walking across a crosswalk. A white car is parked on the street. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

Game 7 of '60, foot of the 9th  
Forbes Field sets the scene  
Maz steps up lookin' mighty mean  
Fans stood atop Cathy on high  
Bat cocked and aimin' at the sky  
A crack rings, a stroke of luck  
Game over, a win for the Bucs!

**Tylar Farmer**  
2022





Trains chug,  
bikes zoom.  
Trucks lug,  
cars vroom.  
Dozers roar,  
kayaks glide.  
Planes soar,  
people ride!

**Jessica Manack**  
*2020*



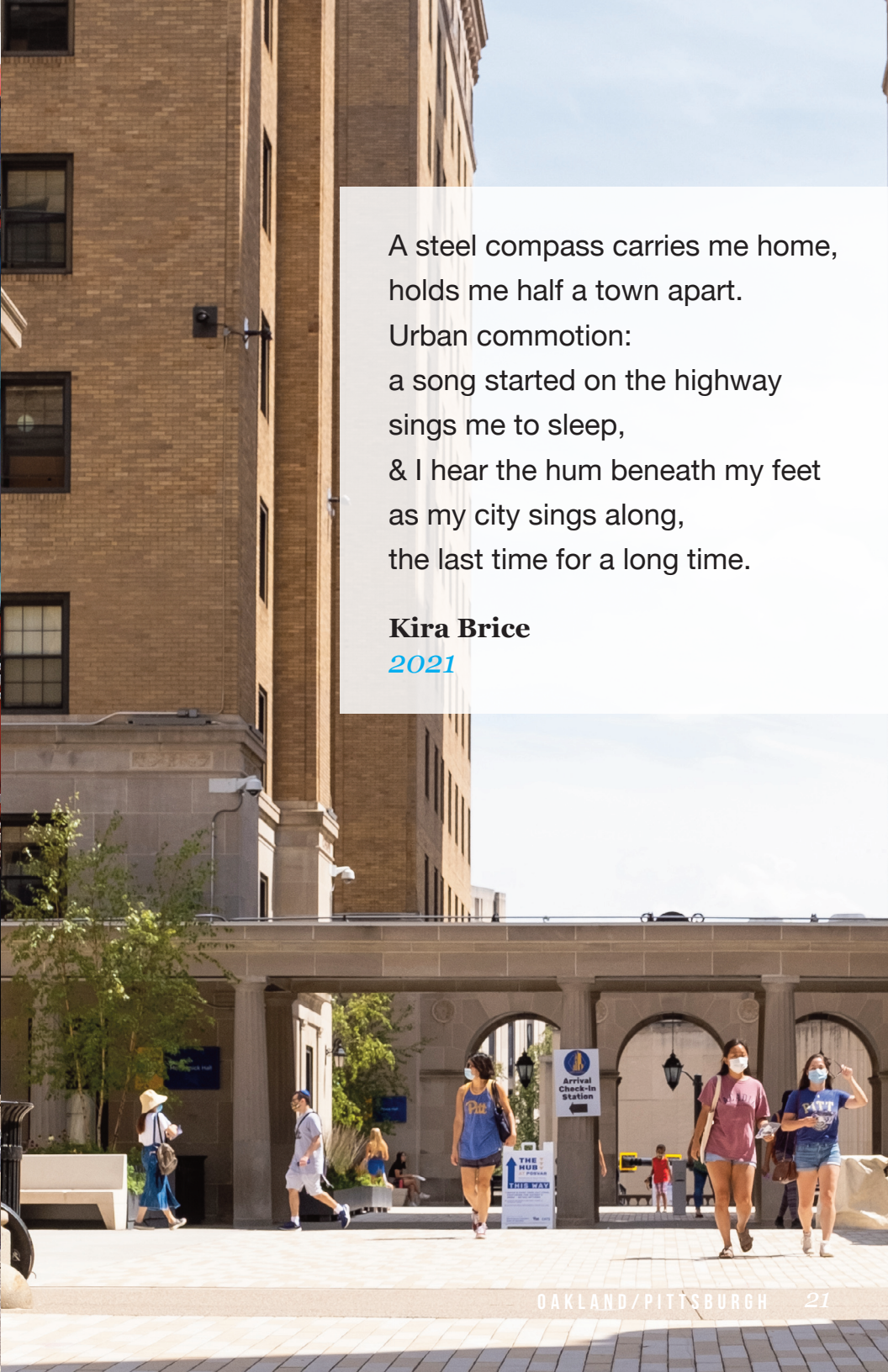


## The Finish Line

Sweat. Breathe. Inhale Schenley's trees.  
The homestretch: accelerate over the bridge,  
Into Oakland's welcoming arms.  
Under Cathy's steady gaze  
An oasis awaits.

**Jonathan Rubin**  
2022



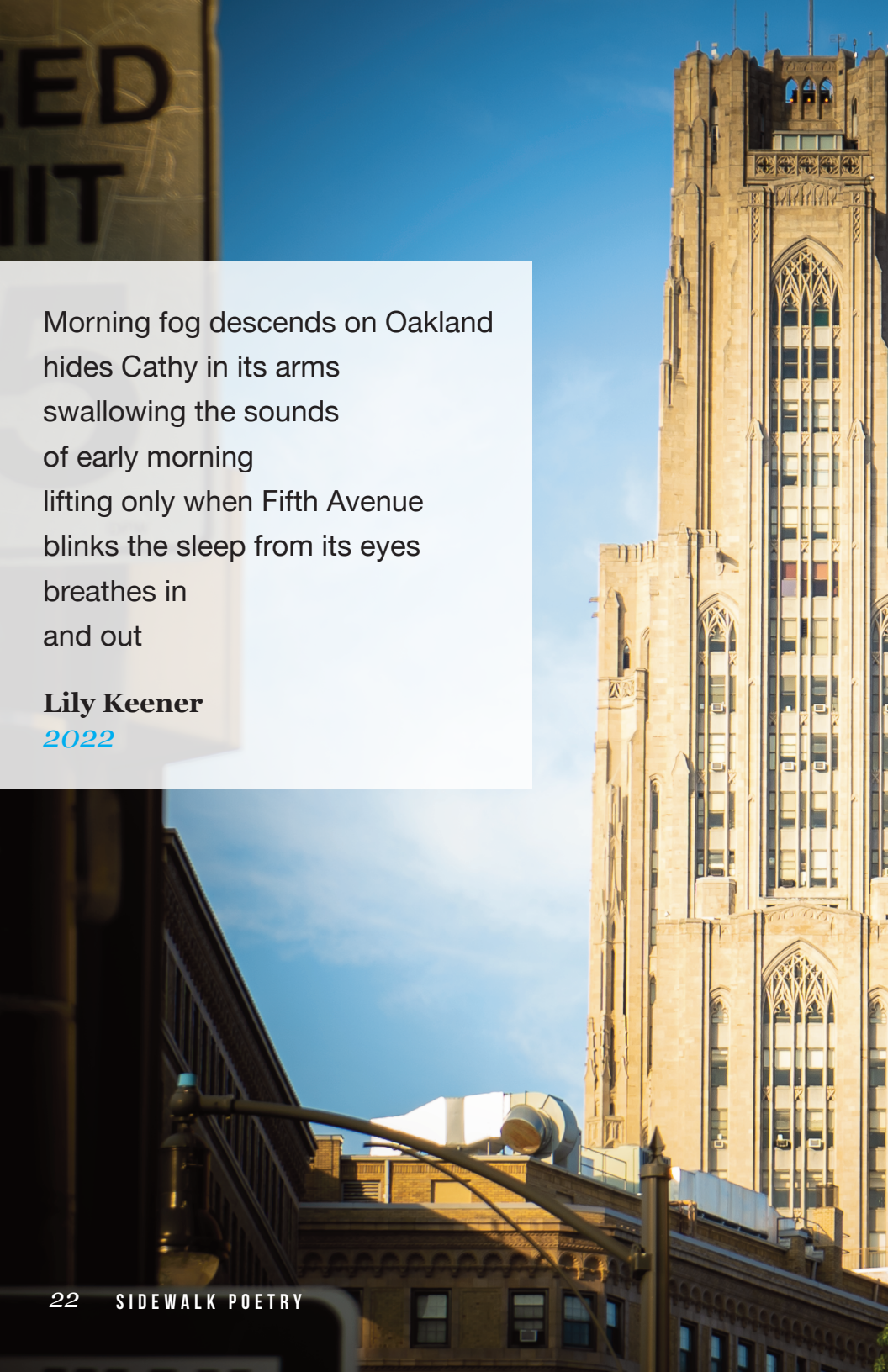


A steel compass carries me home,  
holds me half a town apart.

Urban commotion:  
a song started on the highway  
sings me to sleep,  
& I hear the hum beneath my feet  
as my city sings along,  
the last time for a long time.

**Kira Brice**

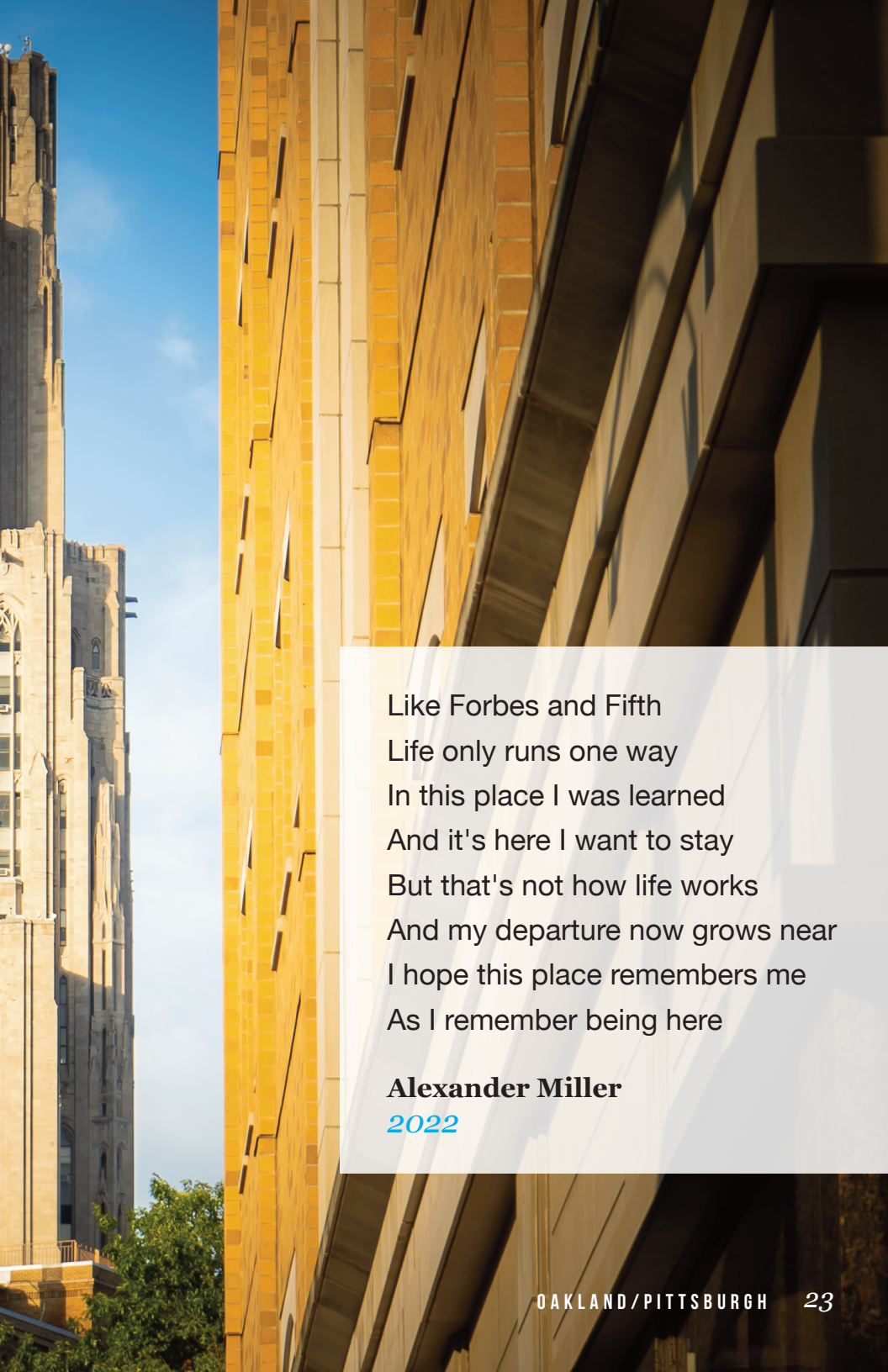
*2021*



Morning fog descends on Oakland  
hides Cathy in its arms  
swallowing the sounds  
of early morning  
lifting only when Fifth Avenue  
blinks the sleep from its eyes  
breathes in  
and out

**Lily Keener**  
*2022*

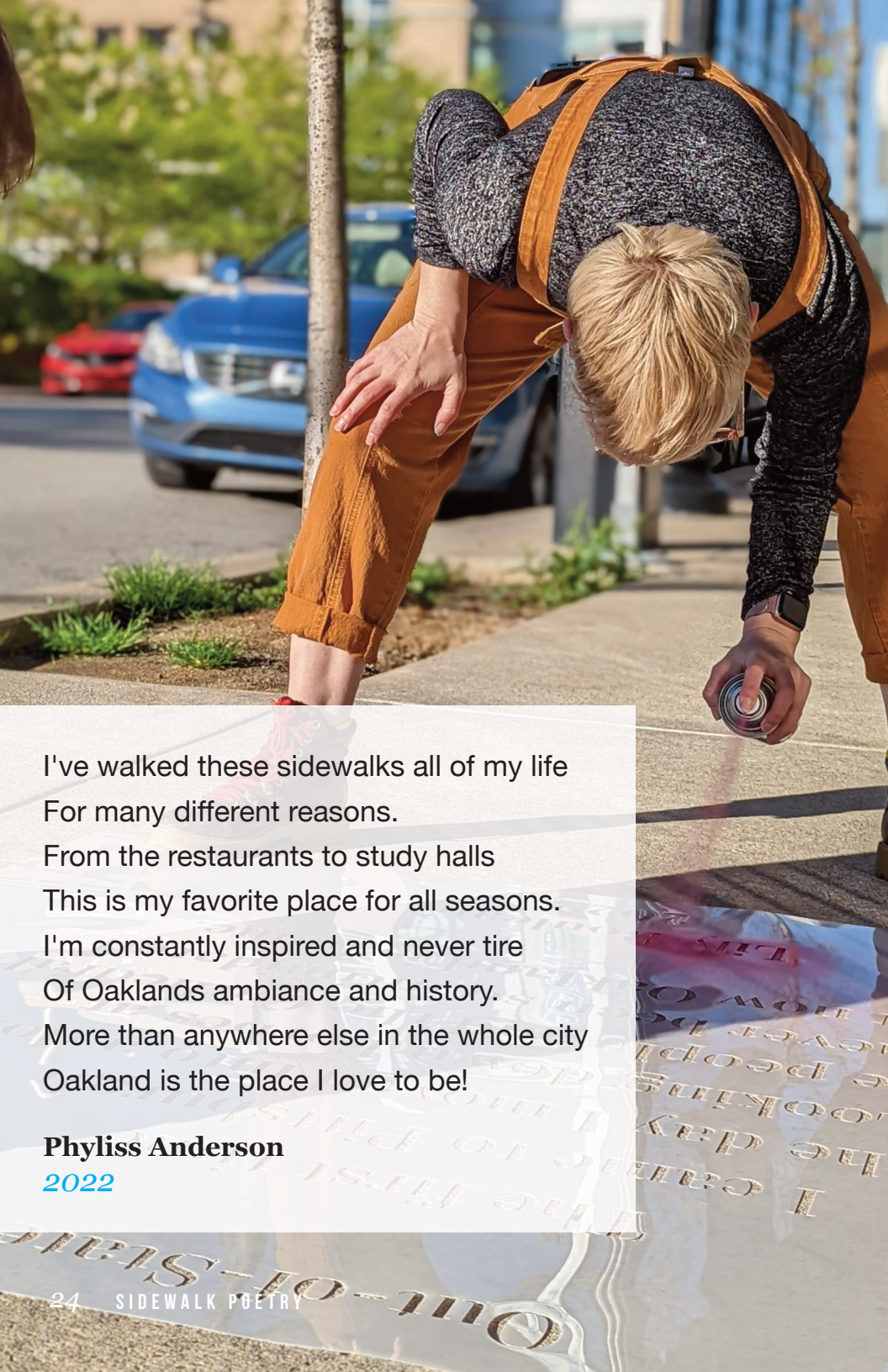




Like Forbes and Fifth  
Life only runs one way  
In this place I was learned  
And it's here I want to stay  
But that's not how life works  
And my departure now grows near  
I hope this place remembers me  
As I remember being here

**Alexander Miller**

**2022**

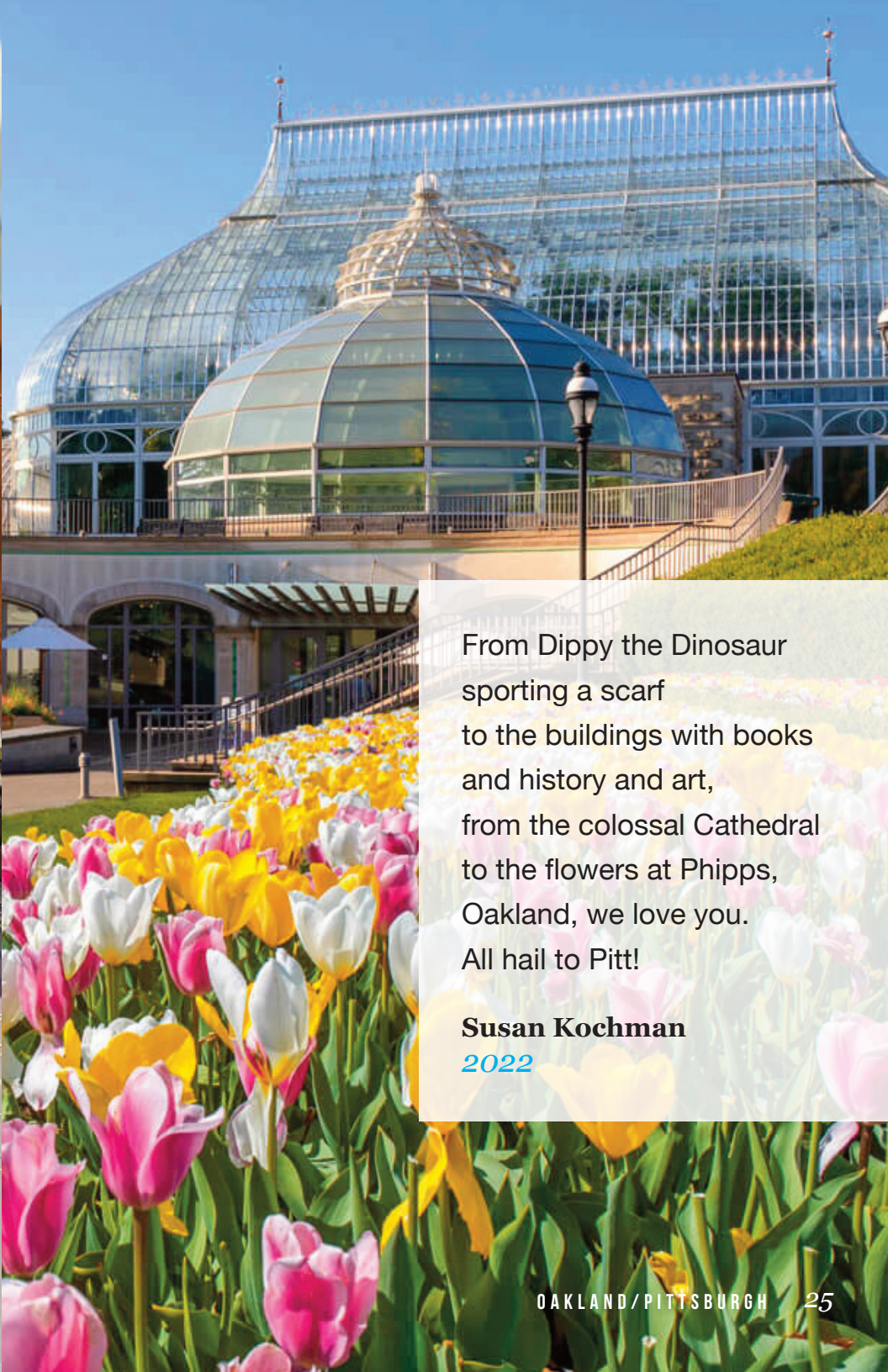


I've walked these sidewalks all of my life  
For many different reasons.  
From the restaurants to study halls  
This is my favorite place for all seasons.  
I'm constantly inspired and never tire  
Of Oakland's ambiance and history.  
More than anywhere else in the whole city  
Oakland is the place I love to be!

**Phyliss Anderson**

**2022**

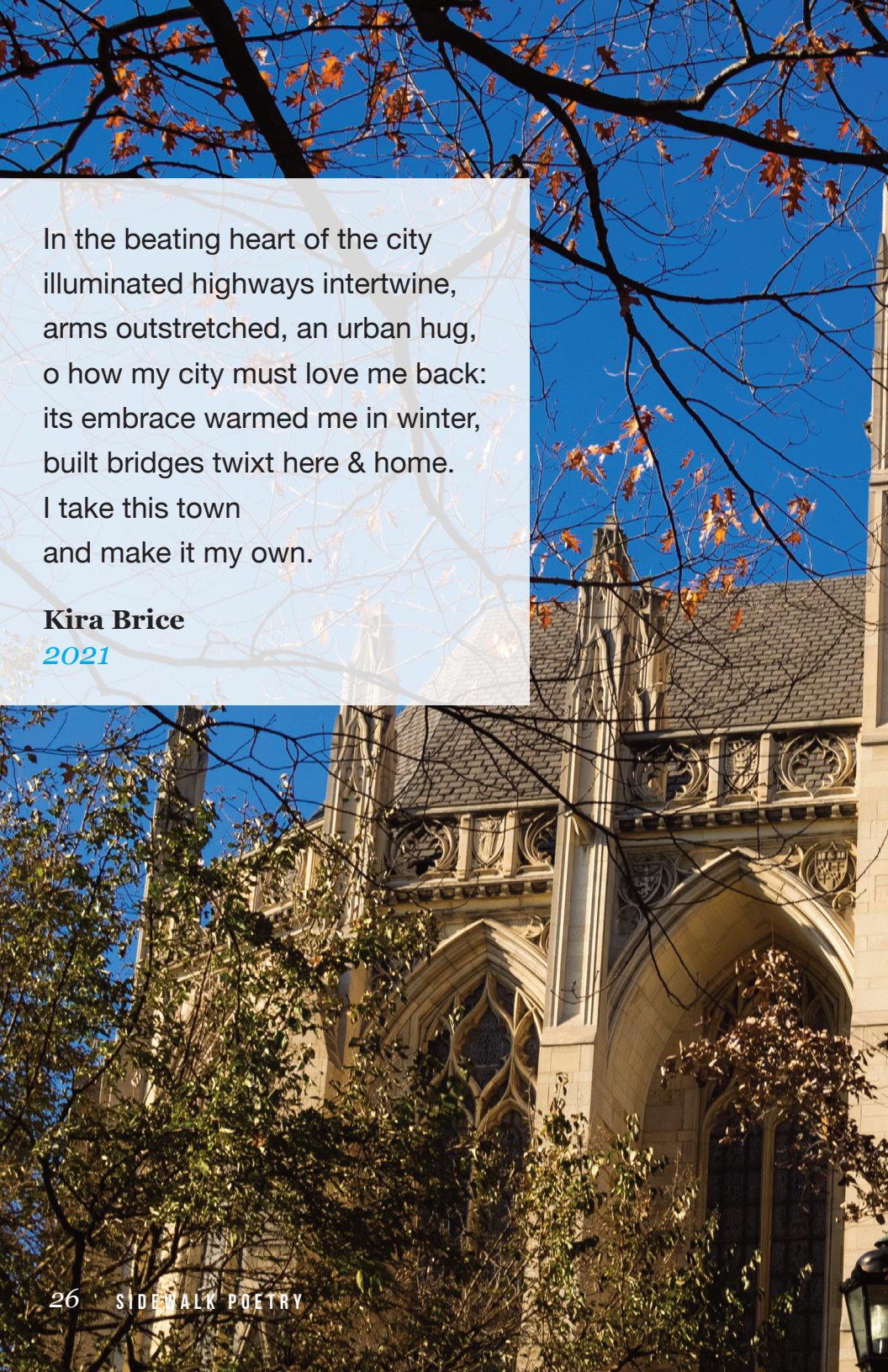




From Dippy the Dinosaur  
sporting a scarf  
to the buildings with books  
and history and art,  
from the colossal Cathedral  
to the flowers at Phipps,  
Oakland, we love you.  
All hail to Pitt!

**Susan Kochman**  
*2022*





In the beating heart of the city  
illuminated highways intertwine,  
arms outstretched, an urban hug,  
o how my city must love me back:  
its embrace warmed me in winter,  
built bridges twixt here & home.  
I take this town  
and make it my own.

**Kira Brice**  
*2021*





## Love the Life of Oakland

Outstanding neighborhoods  
Amazing world class hospitals  
Known for our variety of museums  
Limitless international cuisine  
Awesome universities to attend  
Notable historic landmarks  
Distinct culture, like no other

**Ziva Schmitt**

**2022**

*About Oakland  
Business Improvement  
District*

We are a dedicated team of business district visionaries and advocates who are leading the exciting rise of Oakland - Pittsburgh's largest university and hospital district. Since 1999, the Oakland Business Improvement District has been the public/private partnership that provides enhanced beautification services, marketing events and promotion, public art and streetscape improvements and business development on behalf of over 250 member business and property owners. The OBID is supported, in part, by these member owners including Carlow University, UPMC, Magee-Womens Hospital of UPMC and the University of Pittsburgh.

**Sponsors**

UPMC  
University of Pittsburgh

**Website**

[https://oaklandpittsburgh.com/  
pages/sidewalk-poetry](https://oaklandpittsburgh.com/pages/sidewalk-poetry)

**Map**

[https://oaklandpittsburgh.com/  
pages/sidewalk-poetry](https://oaklandpittsburgh.com/pages/sidewalk-poetry)

**Photography**

Leah Friedman  
Kevin Gubish  
Jeff Miskis

**Brochure & Logo Design**

Behar-Fingal



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