PRESS RELEASE: Four Way Books announces the publication of *Digest*, the second collection of poetry by Gregory Pardlo. To contact the poet regarding interviews and appearances or to request a review or desk copy, please e-mail publicity@fourwaybooks.com.

From Epicurus to Sam Cook, the *Daily News* to *Roots*, *Digest* draws from the present and the past to form an intellectual, American identity. In poems that forge their own styles and strategies, we experience dialogues between the written word and other art forms. Within this dialogue we hear Ben Jonson, we meet police K-9s, and we find children negotiating a sense of the world through a father’s eyes and through their own.

PRAISE FOR *DIGEST*

“A bright-red thread of fatherhood runs through this book—at times tenuous, at times mythic—always searching and revelatory, grounded in our present moment while wrestling with eternity—a thrilling, brilliant, and deeply moving ride.”

—Nick Flynn

“Gregory Pardlo renders history just as clearly and palpably as he renders New York City, or Copenhagen, or his native New Jersey. But mostly what he renders is America, with its intractable conundrums and its clashing iconographies. With lines that balance poise and a jam-packed visceral music, and images that glimmer and seethe together like a conflagration, these poems are a showcase for Pardlo’s ample and agile mind, his courageous social conscience, and his mighty voice.”

—Tracy K. Smith

“In an age of poems crafted to resemble linguistic balloon-animals or sheets of floral wallpaper, it is rare to find an American poet thinking seriously about anything. I suppose that’s what makes Gregory Pardlo’s engaged, intelligent poetry, with its exuberant range of cultural and historical reference, feel a bit like stumbling out of the desert to encounter the Nile River. Smart and humane, *Digest* engages in lyricized textual analysis, playful philosophical exegesis, and satirical syllabi building, even as it evokes a Whitmanesque Brooklyn of the 21st Century that Pardlo inhabits with a ‘neighborknowing confidence and ease.’ These are poems that delight the ear, encourage the heart, and nourish the brain.”

—Campbell McGrath
Problema 3

The Fulton St. Foodtown is playing Motown and I’m surprised at how quickly my daughter picks up the tune. And soon the two of us, plowing rows of goods steeped in fructose under light thick as corn oil, are singing Baby, I need your lovin, unconscious of the lyrics’ foreboding. My happy child riding high in the shopping cart as if she’s cruising the polished aisles on a tractor laden with imperishable foodstuffs. Her cornball father enthusiastically prompting with spins and flourishes and the double-barrel fingers of the gunslinger’s pose. But we hear it as we round the rice and Goya aisle, that other music, the familiar exchange of anger, the war drums of parent and child. The boy wants, what, to be carried? to eat the snacks right from his mother’s basket? What does it matter, he is making a scene. With no self-interest beyond the pleasure of replacing wonder with wonder, my daughter asks me to name the boy’s offense. I offer to buy her ice cream. How can I admit recognizing the portrait of fear the mother’s face performs, the inherited terror of non-conformity frosted with the fear of being thought disrespected by, or lacking the will to discipline one’s child? How can I account for both the cultural and the intercultural? The boy’s cries rising like hosannas as the mother’s purse falls from her shoulder. Her missed step from the ledge of one of her stilted heels, passion loosed with each displaced hairpin. His little jacket bunched at the collar where she has worked the marionette. Later, when I’m placing groceries on the conveyor belt and it is clear I’ve forgotten the ice cream, my daughter tries her hand at this new algorithm of love, each word punctuated by her little fist: boy, she commands, didn’t I tell you?