

## Spokane Authors & Self-Publishers

### Member Web-Page



Dennis Held

Dennis Held is the fourth of eight kids, and he was raised in Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin. In 1976, he dropped out of high school and received his GED. After working in factories, restaurants and ditches in and around Milwaukee, he spent a year taking care of his grandfather, who had Alzheimer's disease. A year later, at 25, he took that GED and started college at the University of Wisconsin two-year branch in Waukesha. He moved to Olympia and graduated from The Evergreen State College in 1985, with a dual degree in journalism and creative writing. After a year to collect his thoughts, he entered the University of Montana master's of fine arts program in writing, and received his MFA three years later.

At UM, he worked in the writing lab, and taught composition and literature courses. In 1994, he moved to Lewiston, Idaho, to teach literature and writing classes at Lewis-Clark State College. He was faculty adviser to the award-winning student literary magazine, the *Talking River Review*, and taught editing and journalism classes. His writing appeared in *Poetry* magazine, *Poets & Writers*, the *Alaska Quarterly Review*, and many other journals.

In 2001, he moved to Spokane, Washington, where he has taught for the Community Colleges of Spokane, and has led workshops in poetry writing and manuscript preparation, partnering with Spark Central and other community organizations. In 2019, he will teach a poetry-writing workshop for CCS's Act Two program. His poetry has appeared recently online at Terrain.org and Dispatches from the Poetry Wars ([dispatchespoetrywars.com](http://dispatchespoetrywars.com)).

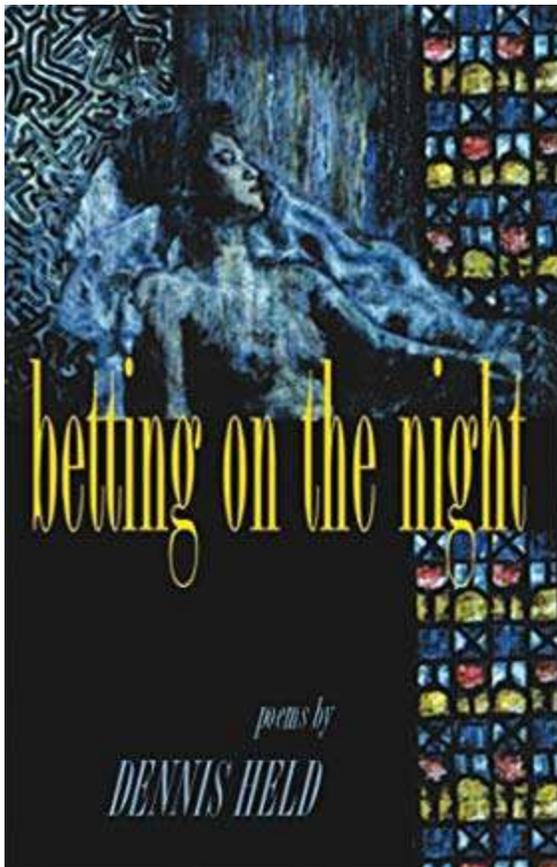
He has published two books: *Betting on the Night*, first published in 2001 by *Lost Horse Press*, and republished in a second printing; and *Ourselves*, published in 2011 by Gribble Press. He continues to publish nonfiction articles, book reviews and essays on such topics as morel mushroom hunting and Old Guy Basketball.

Since 2015, he has been the sole proprietor of Fine Lines, a professional editing service. His editing work has been cited many times, including this from Spokane author Mike StuLtz: "I just wanted to take a minute to thank you for your invaluable help in getting my book *Wings of Ice* ready for publishing. This daunting process was made simple by your knowledge and expertise of both the English language and how to interface with my publisher. I owe you a great deal of thanks and would recommend you to anyone." And this from the acknowledgments page of the *Viking Portable Western Reader*, an anthology edited by William Kittredge: "But most of all I have to thank Dennis Held. Without his good sense and scrupulous attention to detail, this book would not have come to exist. Dennis showed me a lot of poems I would have overlooked. His eye for excellence has a lot to do with the quality of what we have here."

Dennis would like to say thanks to all the inspirational teachers in his life: past, present and future.

*Continue below for information about Dennis's books.  
(Includes Amazon™/Kindle™ ASIN codes)*

## **Betting on the Night**    0966861280



Held's poems are so full of keenly heard sounds, sharply observed sights, sly and sympathetic humor, and enjoyed experience that it is easy to fall in love with them. Maybe that explains the bare-breasted beauty languidly, tantalizingly dozing (in a chapel? an art museum?) on the cover. At any rate, the poems are actually about fishing, relaxing with the Packers on TV or a bottle of bourbon, remembering burning the trash outdoors, skipping church of a Sunday, and imagining the glaciers creating the Midwest. They include celebrations of weeds, the poet's scrotum, and childish abandon; a fantasia about some cats who haunt a grain elevator; a perfectly envisioned moment of self-pity ("Before Fire"); a serious parody that turns the justified bitterness in a Richard Hugo poem into philosophical amusement; a tribute to Fred Flintstone; and a couple glimpses of Van Gogh riding the rails and stalking the landscape of Montana. Set in Wisconsin and Montana, they are poems of the Northwest, gusts of sweet, cold, enlivening air. *Ray Olson*

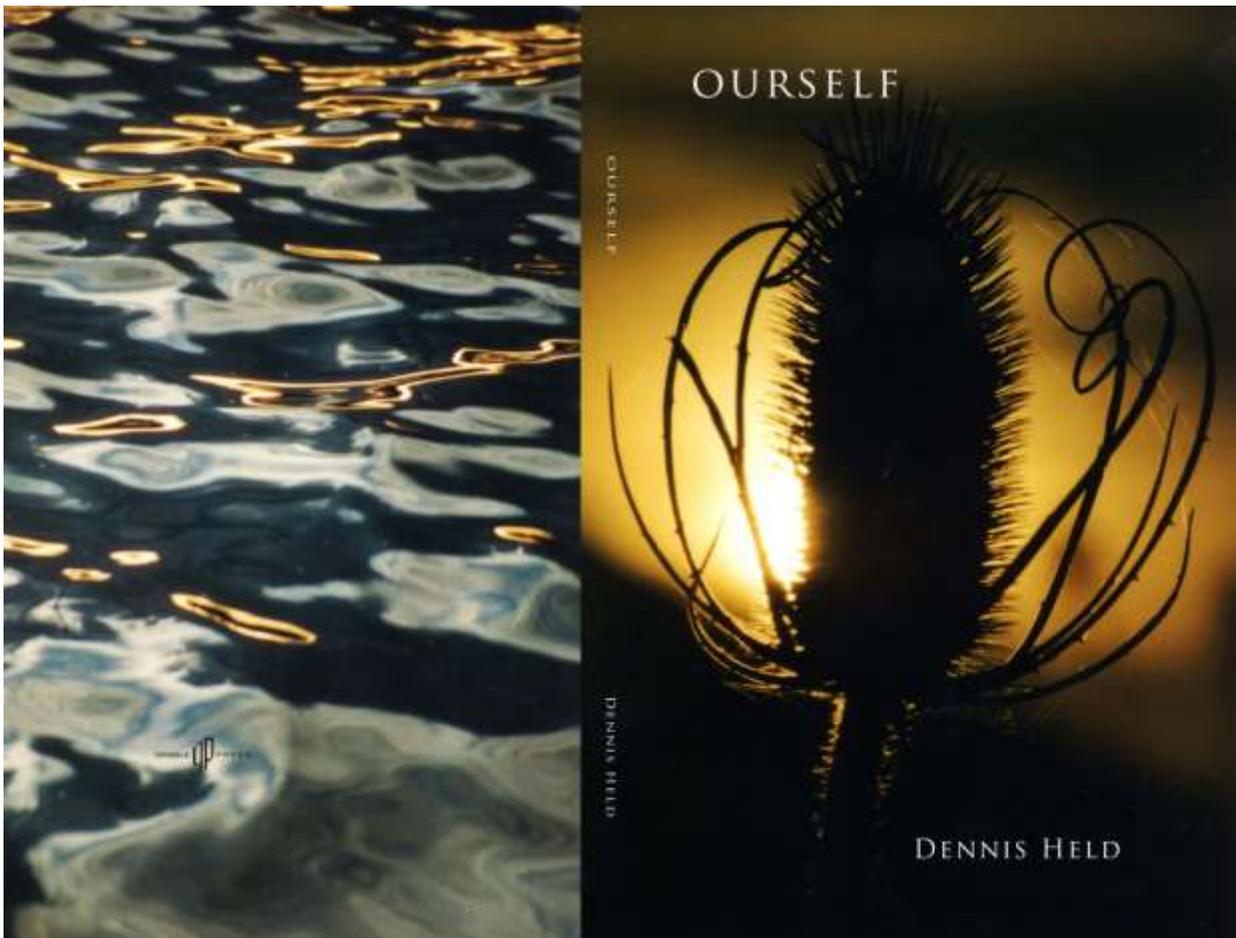
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The poems in *Betting on the Night* . . . are full of hope but not conviction, full of doubt but not despair, full of wit and humor and fancy but not frivolity, true to the real, true to the

ideal. The sound of the language in these poems is convincing. The words and their order, the rich images and their forms, address the struggle, humor and surprise of life. In detail and moment, Dennis Held reminds us again and again of the utter marvel of our being, and he does so with honesty and grace. --Pattiann Rogers

From the moraines of Wisconsin to the Idaho Rockies, Dennis Held writes about America. His poems find their roots, like the poems of Richard Hugo and Ray Carver, deep in the organic soil of physical detail. --Dorianne Laux

**Ourself** Available at Spokane's **Atticus**, **Auntie's Bookstore**, or **the author**



*Ourself* is the mature work of a major American poet. Dennis Held's poems are deeply moving, and always well-crafted. He does not turn away from difficult subjects, but he is a master of leavening the darkness with insight and humor.--Derek Sheffield, author of *Through the Second Skin*



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