

strident vision of Rathke, who drew inspiration from the agrarian revolt that produced the Nonpartisan League.

In the book, which predates ACORN's demise, Atlas fleshes out the press record with mitigating insider facts. He doesn't gloss over the most damning of ACORN's "growing pains," such as the widely publicized prostitute and pimp "sting" or the embezzlement of \$1 million, later repaid, by Rathke's brother Dale. As for the notorious tape showing ACORN staffers advising two right-wing plants on how to hide prostitution income from the federal government and purchase property for a brothel, Atlas writes what TV viewers could not have known: that a widely seen video of the conservative activists "dressed up in cartoonish pimp garb" had been doctored, and that when the activists actually entered the ACORN office, they wore respectable dress shirts and khakis.

The book ricochets from the South to New York to the Twin Cities and south again to New Orleans, with Rathke and his minions strategizing to deliver rightful benefits after Hurricane Katrina and get the disenfranchised to the polls.

Setting up temporary headquarters in Baton Rouge, the organization swung into action with computer message boards and housing officers both in New Orleans and Houston, where members often greeted busloads of refugees when they arrived at the Astrodome.

Atlas delivers a rare look into the machinery of a high-profile, controversial grassroots organization—how battles are chosen and troops mobilized, how victory is measured, how the comfortable are afflicted. He believes that for all its notoriety, ACORN is likely to be the model for social movements to follow. *SS*

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### Sync Your Relationship, Save Your Marriage

**Peter Fraenkel (CAS'80)**  
*Palgrave Macmillan*

A COUPLES THERAPIST for 20 years, Fraenkel believes many potentially good marriages are strained by differences in what he calls life pace. Often, those differences are what

attracted partners to each other in the first place—"you liked his fast pace and high energy; he loved your laid-back side." But, Fraenkel writes, when these misplaced timelines begin to take their toll, couples can resolve the resulting conflicts by practicing the four steps of his Relationships Rhythms Analysis: reveal your couple rhythms; revalue the rhythms that work; revise the rhythms that don't; and rehearse new ones.

The guide's 238 dense pages are laced throughout with literary and scholarly references, including the wisdom of the ancient Greeks. The book makes Fraenkel's case for getting out-of-sync partnerships back on track with self-tests, charts, an abundance of anecdotes, "stresses and solutions," relationship theory, and meditations on the nature and meaning of time and the sense that it is in increasingly short supply.

He goes after this and other myths, including the notion that "quality time" often means more time: "As long as you are focused and attentive," he writes, "it doesn't matter how small the segments of time you have for each other." And he urges struggling couples instead of harboring resentment, to

clarify their time priorities, cultivate "deep listening," learn to balance work and relationships, and "create a regular rhythm of sexual and emotional intimacy."

There's a lot to digest in Fraenkel's packed prescription. But if it strays from the pat how-to formula, it offers far broader context and is more thought-provoking than the usual save-your-marriage tomes. With our busy lives, we can all manage our time better and with a heightened sensitivity to loved ones, steps that are bound to improve all our relationships, endangered or not. *SS*

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**WEBEXTRA** Through July, couples therapist Peter Fraenkel will answer your questions about marriage at [bu.edu/bostonia](http://bu.edu/bostonia).

## Poetry

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### No Day, No Dusk, No Love

**Carla Panciera (GRS'87)**  
*Bordighera Press*



PANCIERA IS A whimsical storyteller and insightful witness to nature and lives lost to history. There is a quiet warmth to her poetry, a confessional tone that invites readers to be part

of her world.

That world plunges into the past lives of rivers, Native American tribes, and family members and surges forward to her musings as a high school English teacher and mother of three daughters.

Her imagery is crisp and creative, evoking all the senses on a single page. In "Here and Then," she writes of the distinct smell of the forest floor, "as if decay itself breathes in and out." And a deep, bubbling voice rises in "I Wish My Love Was a River," when she longs for her lover's words to travel up "through a throat of stones."

Water is a place of reflection for Panciera, as when she writes of the seashore in Maine, the Sakonnet River, or Halfmoon Pond. She seeks connection to the water, has a respectful awe for its powers, and hints at the secrets hidden in its depths.

Loss and longing are common themes in her work—whether for a family member, a farmhouse destroyed by fire, or an evanescent moment at dusk. The ache and joy of motherhood also abide in Panciera's work. In her "Elegy for the Perfect Bones," she mourns her daughter's fractured arm, wishing it forever whole and unscathed as it was the day she was born. She likewise struggles with the impossibility of fulfilling her daughter's wish for a turtle in "This Is What It Means: Allegory for Beatrice."

Panciera's collection of 33 poems, presented in both English and Italian, will make you smile in recognition of a tender moment, give you pause at those that are harder to bear, and pull you in again for another read. *LF* ■