Michael Ruby’s second book of poetry, WINDOW ON THE CITY, was published by BlazeVOX Books in Buffalo in 2006, and his prose FLEETING MEMORIES is appearing as an ebook this year from Ugly Duckling Presse in Brooklyn. His long poem “First Names” was Mudlark No. 24 (2004). He’s also the editor of David Herfort’s WASHTENAW COUNTY JAIL AND OTHER WRITINGS (Xlibris, 2005), a 1970s prison memoir. “Titles & First Lines” is part of a recently finished poetry book, COMPULSIVE WORDS. Other recent poems can be found in ezines La Petite Zine, Shampoo, BlazeVOX, Unpleasant Event Schedule, word for/word, GutCult, mprsnd and Dusie. He’s currently working on several new poetry books and a prose history of the families of his great-grandparents in Eastern Europe and the U.S. He lives with his wife and three daughters in Park Slope, Brooklyn, and works as a journalist.

TITLES & FIRST LINES

The wound wouldn’t heal

seelah farfetched family

Halls Full of Doorways

mountebank forthright real estate

A Springtime Reverie About Chinese Rulers

force field tenderloin operation
Beware of the Symbolic

asterisk
punishing
tabasco

It’s too cloudy to bomb Radnoti today

Foch
discombobulate
fume

America swallows people

homework
impugns
force

Indo-European Roots

moose
destroy
opera

Clay Feet

cellophane
unreachable
level

In the media, most people in this country no longer exist

Boris
held
outside

Asymptomatic

forest
braises
soupy

The Secret Histories of Objects

plop
carnal
lice

Dear Sara

toystore
pirates
pontoon

Rooms in the Back of a House

maroons
distinct
elephants

Every century has its symbols—Hess at Spandau—and they don’t endure

baby
bedsores
falsify

Snow melting outside a suburban bowling alley

megaton
blessed
superior

Subdural Hematoma

seminary
neglect
slake

I admit it, I’m a philistine, I like fourth movements best

roundups
dream
mathematical
There’s usually a false ending before a true ending

melody sweet and sour lozenge

Living Our Lives Together, in This House

blank manufacture allegations

It’s a Cold Street (When You’re Deranged)

today drenched absence

People Step Back From the Dying

farthing portmanteau somatic

Swiss Cheese & Green Apples

premium blank sooth

There’s a defect in the psyche where all the gunk accumulates

Brian boils nostrum

Fuck You, 20th Century

peacenik dekes faucets

It’s not my world anymore. Was it ever my world?

Borman unrestricted passages

Contemptus Mundi

saccharine suggestive taut

Taedium Vitae

compendium mangle form

Afterdeath Music

dominance gorgeous mace

Lakeville Rd.

preponderance invent slime

The Last Movement of the Last (Unfinished) Symphony

demagoguery precious cigar

This is how it must be for many people—experiences pile on top of experiences, books on top of books

piecemeal breeding information
If something catches your eye, read it right away

breathe without orifice

So Many on the Make

pontoonse enough tokens

Everything That Never Went Anywhere

megadustdevil aftermaths

The sunset happens far away now, for someone else

beeswax demonize ants

Blueberries From Chile

bwana must open

Is it possible to apologize for the Crusades?

mean-spirited recollect plenty

Spectral Music

decalogue born face

We, too, nearly died on the west bank of the Vistula

devious scenic implant

At all times, something is being let slide

brainstorms boyish flakes

A cigarette is not the answer to anything

demonstration bravura flavors

The World Is Everything That Shouldn’t Be the Case

beavers ail lances

The Dead Lose the World

dubious seasoned eleven

Like so many others, there’s nothing I like more than a media feeding frenzy

damned dispatched Oregon

A True Account of My Emotions Watching Pasolini’s “Salo”

beaming braying septic
Mourning Dove, Forever and Ever Amen

Haley
doubly
fraught

The Closing of Greystone
toke
doppler
torque

Dead Stars
preeminent
faceless
ducts

Sic Semper Tyrannis
Boris
telemarkets
omniscience
There is almost a world, almost some people, almost a society
brief
telltale
freights

Nothing Is Ever Lost
ormolu
invoice
investigations
Either the sun is stronger or I am weaker
evidence
sells
letters
You see ’em sometimes, guys about to crack
basketball
glass door
applesauce

The Endless Sorting
mania
summarizes
logs

Time Is … Not of the Essence
priceless
oily
green
Whatever happens, I want to feel good about my life, grateful for it
bam
peanut
ice cream

“I Was at That Game”
horror
vindicates
laparoscope

Warm Liquids
tooth
layer
escapade

“To the Memory of the Lower Middle Class”
Doria
doll
gas
The sun came out once, for a few minutes

aftermath flattened sandwiches

Every day is Morton Feldman Day in this house

ice cream thrush lake

A Child Is Filled With Love

noise poisons allowance

There are times in life when opposite responses to a situation are equally justified

beverage seamless fasten

The Ghost of a Small Farmhouse

government ointment plastic

One More Thing We Didn’t Live Through Together

sandstorm coddle aspirin

There was one light on, deep in the house

meeting centennial infinitesimal

A Snowy Road

doily Bartholomew applesauce

Sacramental Drama

premise formaldehyde rascal

The Future of Decadence

woeful bombastic stripes

The condition of knowledge henceforth is a feeling of inadequacy

brevity salient origin

You’re given a life of unknown duration—and sometime it runs out

semblance sodas parkas

Connoisseur of Small Towns

physical transfigured marked

They’ll never get it, they’ll never know what hit them, they’ll never know why they’re old and worried

bored sleepy heart
What has died here, and what has never lived?

test tubes  purple  sauce

Without Sugar

demonstrable  righteous  doves

Where Are We in the Roman Empire Right Now?

meniscus  transparent  happenings

Aberrance

Louisiana  paleface  forked
And there was a white amaryllis on the piano

paperweight  tethered  embraces
It’s bad to wish bad on people

sombrero  diamond  positive

Northern Landscapes

morganatic  breezeway  basketball

Snoop Doggy Dogg’s Voice

personal  lambent  harpoon
Sometimes a room falls asleep, and it can last forever

megillah  determinate  lace

You Can Only Stay With the Dead So Long

sorry  satisfy  ice

Alternate Constructions of Time

peevish  Septembris  brace

P.S.

Korea  Norman  blue
It’s not my world

tired  demonstration  hate

And the Silence Grows

perverse  barnstorming  ark
What Does Society *Owe* Someone?

Morgan
telling
telling
Pardon Me, Kalidasa

Pardon Me, Kalidasa
toady
sine
toady
Old Trees

Old Trees
baskets
ransack
baskets
Religious Gunman

Religious Gunman
purist
modify
purist
This summer, the ballfields are empty
mollify
transcend
mollify
If the past is infinite, how did we ever get to now?
turgid
precipitous
turgid
The Punitive State

The Punitive State
putrid
eavesdrop
putrid
Part of a World

Part of a World
nutshell
men’s store
nutshell
It was a beautiful ghostly existence
peas
detached
peas
I was a victim—and I never was a victim
sieve
ransom
sieve
There are things about life it takes a long time to figure out
mindful
accidental
mindful
The Ferris Wheel of Friends

The Ferris Wheel of Friends
selfish
to placate
selfish
While No One Was Looking

While No One Was Looking
Selma
irrigate
Selma
Chimes

Chimes
rhymes
parched
rhymes
pent
Emotionalism
compelling  breathing  teeth

Tick Tick, Tick Tick
please  timeless  flames
Sometimes, in life, you lose, you really lose, and it’s best to give up
breathing  seething  laughter
You know what happens to drones—they get killed in a frost
armorial  honeyed  leather
What was important? It isn’t always easy to say
diet  times  disease

Lamentations (of a Pariah)
toilet  parking  flies

Live in Japan
negativity  darkening  aimless

Gods Disguised as Mortals Among Us
hellebore  trashes  frank

Objects in the Background of Family Pictures
moisture  swabs  harps

Gardens Are Humbling
tucked  puckered  gray

It took six generations for the money to run out
tonnage  jaundice  fandangos
What’s it like when people don’t see you anymore?
dual  measuring  ape

Rad
megalomaniacal  officer  blood

Ghosts Among Us
together permanent rascal
Six years later, I’m still thinking about him
tooling methodical heavens
All the Little Worlds
periods incontrovertible happiness
Our Cute Typography
pterodactyls everyday talcum
You liked to say you were passing through, but you weren’t
nonesuch bloody tupelo
Falling Through Time
harlequin white holsters
Tall Trees
markup defective roster
A book like the I Ching can wait for decades on a shelf
racing questionable leg
“Time Is Not on Our Side”
somewhere decadent cells
Daily Tours of the History of American Culture
sessions sexualize sand
Recordings of the Dead
derange turpentine onions
The Official Photograph
playful anonymous assassin
It was a shit life, Steve, one of the worst in your class
ugh toasty horses
In the end, we’re the losing team in America
piebald smiling pork
The Dark House
ducks safeguard taste
Antiquity, Mirror of the Future
bucks whereabouts tamp
Christmas vacation isn’t as much fun when you’re dead
melt emissary sins
The Silent Years
eat purple sausage
To the Craven, the Spoils
soy rocky queen
George Lane
populate alias fish
We turn their nights green
seedy spawning applications
Every Love Ends
poly graphic holy
Dusk in a dark house is something I’ll miss
yeah loo safe
Sutskever, Before It’s Too Late
daytime impossible albatross
Meditation on Dick Cheney’s Mouth
Satan empty locket
What Was the Killer?
anger deceptively soft
The good die young—and the shits live forever
what culpable offices
The Angelic Maxine Sullivan
braces brave slice
We’re firing into crowds now
cucaracha  flies  random
A Reputed Descendant of Rashi
tease  saltwater  lasting
Live in Chicago
breathe  far  apples
Every friendship is a dream that ends
Inform  forensic  houses
The Last Refuge of Scoundrels

Copyright © Mudlark 2007

Mudlark
An Electronic Journal
of Poetry & Poetics

Never in and never out of print...
http://www.unf.edu/mudlark