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## Heat Waves

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FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Miami, Florida

HEAT WAVES

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

in

CREATIVE WRITING

by

Edward Charles Krzeminski

To: Dean Michael R. Heithaus  
College of Arts, Sciences and Education

This thesis, written by Edward Charles Krzeminski, and entitled Heat Waves, having been approved in respect to style and intellectual content, is referred to you for judgment.

We have read this thesis and recommend that it be approved.

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Denise Duhamel

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Nathaniel Cadle

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Campbell McGrath, Major Professor

Date of Defense: March 4, 2019

The thesis of Edward Charles Krzeminski is approved.

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Dean Michael R. Heithaus  
College of Arts, Sciences, & Education

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Andrès G. Gil  
Vice President for Research and Economic Development  
And Dean of the University Graduate School

Florida International University, 2019

DEDICATION

For James Langlas

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to my poetry teachers James Langlas, James Brock, Jim Gustafson, Jesse Millner, Julie Marie Wade, Denise Duhamel, and Campbell McGrath for all their guidance and support.

Thanks to my mother and father, who let me keep the reading light on.

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

HEAT WAVES

by

Edward Charles Krzeminski

Florida International University, 2019

Miami, Florida

Professor Campbell McGrath, Major Professor

HEAT WAVES is a collection of confessional poetry exploring themes of masculinity, maturation, loss, consumerism, the growing disparity between the speaker and his family, and American identity. The collection is divided into three sections. The poems in the first section deal with childhood, friendship, and coming of age in Southwest Florida. The second section deals with family and considers the contrast between the beliefs, educational backgrounds, and career of the speaker's father and the speaker himself. The final section explores 21<sup>st</sup> century America and its issues including environmental damage, consumerism, and alienation.

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I

## ODE TO MY PAIR OF CHUCK TAYLORS

O ratty old kicks. O smelly ass shoes  
reeking of wool socks & Florida summer.  
O white laces browned like a Thanksgiving turkey.  
O crease on the capped nose where the stone  
wall kicked back. O charred black canvas, color  
of an old dog's paw, hazing mud & dust.  
O bottom treads, the skateboard deck bloodied  
you like a school bully wanting milk money.  
O worn-in holes, gifting the pinprick kiss  
of grass blades. O rubber gumball outsoles  
that skidded on gym floors, scratched  
against griptape, stamped on lime rock,  
shuffled through April-colored beach sand,  
grazed against the moonlit Bermuda grass  
of golf courses in the late breathless night.

## ODE TO MY ALVA '77

Hundreds if not thousands of miles  
on the old skid deck, brush logo'd griptape,  
colored like a west coast sunrise.  
Bennett trucks, Abec 60m RetroGliders,  
Khiro risers, Rockin Ron's between the axle nuts,  
*fastest money can buy*, Big Jim at the old  
Sanctuary skate shop swore.

I learned to front carve, to lay my ass  
flat & skid, frontside or backside,  
glide my hand across the split asphalt  
for control, gashing through ma's  
gardening gloves, afterwards  
sitting on my board in the muggy  
Florida night sucking blood from my palms.

Fucker still rides, still rolls smooth,  
still kicks when I do the kicking.  
I take her for a spin around the block  
past old spots, back when the neighborhood  
was the farthest the earth's fingers could reach,

the world so small I could have ridden it  
to its end on four urethane wheels.

## ODE TO CALEB'S LOADED VANGUARD DECK

Fiberglass body that flexed and bowed  
so low it'd kiss the pavement.  
Cambered topmount, concave width:  
prime Malaysian mountain bamboo.  
Sidecuts flanked by Paris trucks  
w/ OTangs underneath  
beaming like ripe oranges  
against the hot tar-black roads.

Caleb knew to pump his weight  
for the long curves, knew when to push  
and pull on a bank, when to lean  
and let the board do the work.

He was far beyond any of us. We rode  
with a hi-fi'd violence, as if our boards had said  
something combative from across a bar top,  
taking every turn with bad intentions,  
one small misstep away from a wipeout.

Caleb could switch stance during a run