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**A Exploration of Healing, Loss, and Faith**  
*LSU Press to Publish The Diener in March 2015*

**Baton Rouge**—Martha Serpas’s forthcoming poetry collection, *The Diener*, investigates loss and healing, change and permanence, in a hospital trauma center and in the eroding landscape of southern Louisiana. The diener himself, the morgue attendant who assists the dead in the interstice between the living world and the world beyond, is the person with whom Martha Serpas most identifies in this collection. As a part-time hospital chaplain, Serpas possesses keen insight into the despair and resolve of patients and their families and friends.

Yet the themes in *The Diener* go well beyond grief and loss, as Serpas finds deeper meaning in faith, humanity, and the celebration of life. The diener is preeminent in a cast of characters—a sailor, a clerk, roustabouts, mothers, nurses, and chaplains—that represents the paradoxes of body and soul. Loss is never just absence, and presence is not necessarily wholeness. Attending to the pastoral both as ecological advocacy and spiritual care, *The Diener* looks to the metaphysical world and the Gulf landscape as vehicles of change and stasis.

**Martha Serpas** has published two collections of poetry, *Côte Blanche* and *The Dirty Side of the Storm*. Active in efforts to restore Louisiana's wetlands, she co-produced *Veins in the Gulf*, a documentary about coastal erosion. She teaches at the University of Houston and serves as a hospital trauma chaplain.

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Poetry

To request a review copy or set up an interview with the author,  
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