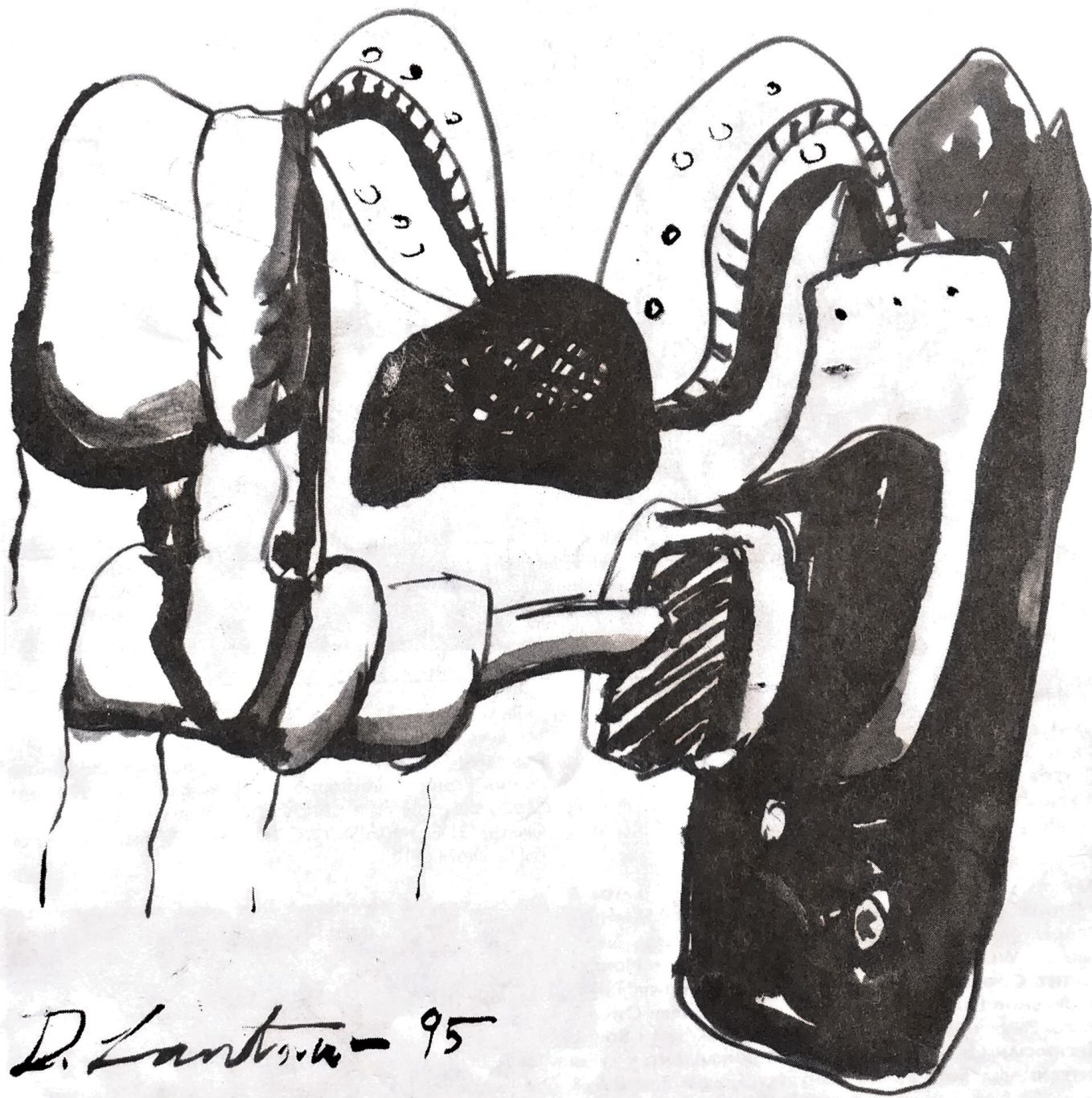


# the poetry project newsletter

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*D. Lantieri - 95*



WHAT'S INSIDE: Studying Hunger: Poetry & Cannibalism • Allen Ginsberg & Kenneth Koch Conversation • Carl Watson Goes Where the Bottos Go • Reviews of Ed Sanders, Patricia Spears Jones, Alice Notley, Gerritt Lansing, Stacy Doris, Jack Kerouac & others.

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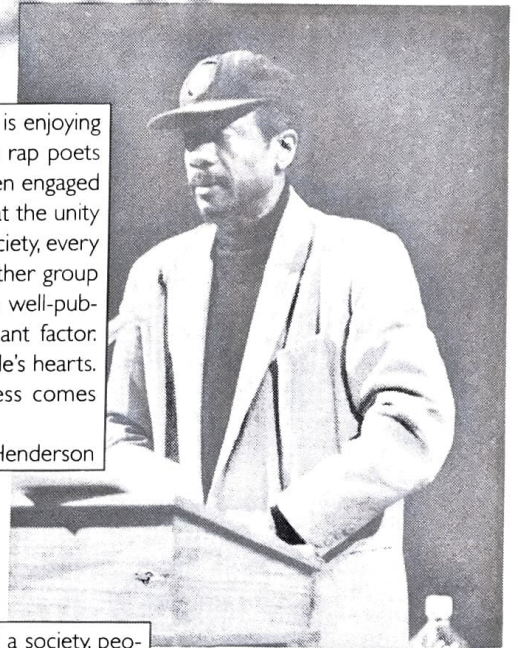
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# symposium

Because of the dearth of real consciousness in the electronic media, poetry is enjoying a boom of some sorts... and there are some making a living...and there are rap poets who are delivering consciousness to an entire population that has never been engaged by publishers or the academy and they are also making a living. So I think that the unity of poets can be a force against the darkness. Poets represent all levels of society, every people, all aspects. Their conscious unity will affect the body politic as no other group or guild or profession could, and it is not the published poets (or even the well-published poets) who dominate. It is the unity of all poets that is the dominant factor. Dominant in the celebration of the expression of what is most high in people's hearts. That unity comes about because here is one realm where consciousness comes together through a trust, a belief in consciousness itself."

— David Henderson

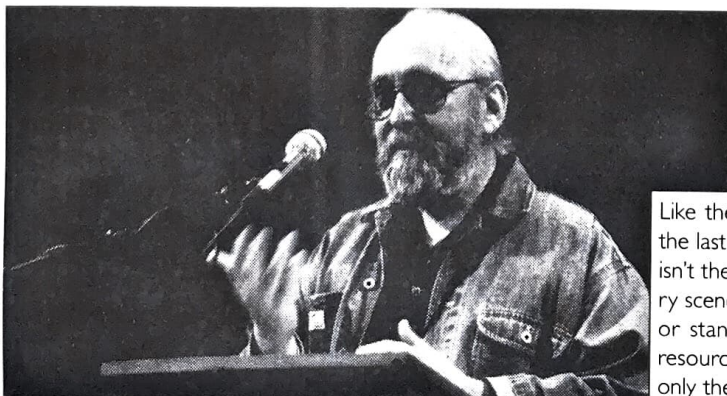
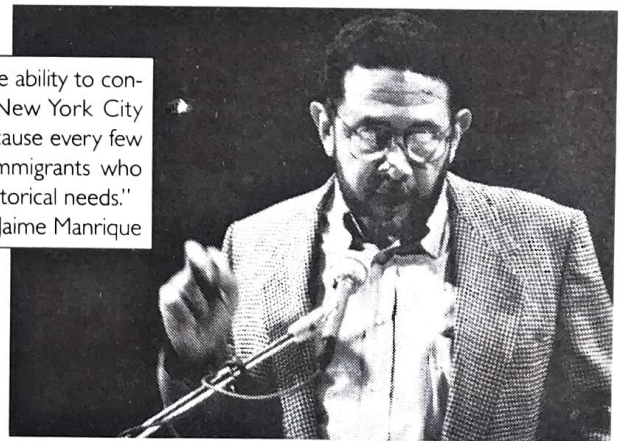


"When there is room for poetry in a society, people are prepared to accept a lot more of poetry. So that the key thing is not what the poetry is doing inside the page, but mostly how the poetry is acting in society itself."

— Cecelia Vicuña

Cultures survive triumphantly when they have the ability to continually renew and transform themselves. If New York City remains the cultural center of our planet it is because every few generations or so it is enriched by waves of immigrants who invent new ways of expressing their particular historical needs."

— Jaime Manrique



Like the rest of us here, what I've been trying to figure out over the last few years — but maybe most of my life if it comes to it — isn't the state of the art from one season to another or one poetry scene to another. It isn't a question of personnel or personalities or standings (who is up and who is down) as much as of the resources available to us as poets, language artists. Then — but only then — the personnel, the actors, can come into it, in answer to the questions that the work elicits: who is it that has made the resources available? Who has delivered, given us the goods?"

— Jerome Rothenberg

# ALLEN GINSBERG & KENNETH KOCH:

THE POETRY PROJECT'S 1995 SYMPOSIUM

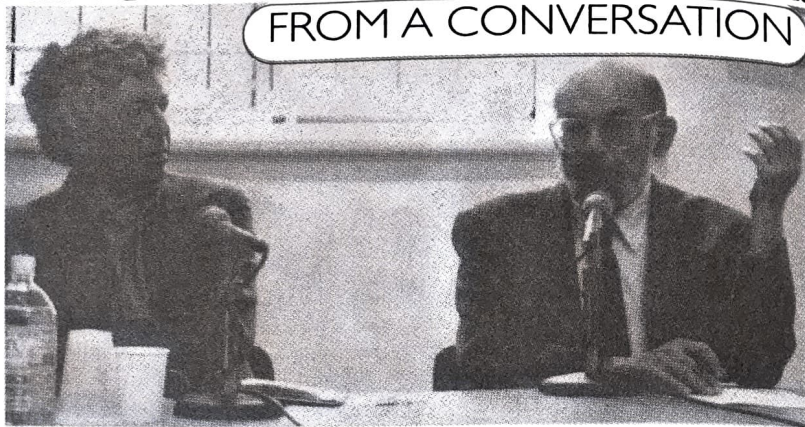
The following is an excerpt from a much longer discussion:

**What pre-twentieth century poet do you think wrote valuable work, neglected by anthologists?**

**AG** Christopher Smart. Rejoice In the Lamb was not published until the 1920s or so. It was written during the time of Dr. Johnson and is an 80 page poem of which you'll see in anthologies only the one & a half pages of "For I will consider my cat Geoffrey." Everybody knows that one? But there's 80 more pages that are much more brilliant than that covering Kabbalah, the Hebrew alphabet, the Greek alphabet, minerals, ecology, written (mythically) three verses a day in Bethlehem Mental Hospital. Bedlam.

Then there's Edward Carpenter. He was the tutor to Queen Victoria's children in the nineteenth century. Later on he was an outspoken gay activist, visited Walt Whitman, was very much influenced by Whitman and wrote a huge book of poems called *Toward Democracy* that really has some brilliant poems in it, particularly a description of a train journey between Paris and Turin, and a fantastic 1880's visionary theosophical poem called *The Secret of Time and Satan*, which is so brilliant and the acme of late Victorian romanticism. And I remember hearing it read to me by the grandson of President Chester A. Arthur, Gavin Arthur, who was one of the elegant old men in San Francisco during the 60's. He read it to me and Robert Creeley, and we were both completely knocked out so I went and found, there is a one volume version of *Toward Democracy*, this Whitmanic long verse line assemblage. It's nowhere near as good as Whitman, but there are a couple of stand out poems that are just knock-outs and there aren't that many really good poems written in long verse lines as models.

So I would like to say something about the twentieth century. One great poet who's not very well known; Marsden Hartley as poet, rarely anthologized. But when I went to visit William Carlos Williams in the early 50's and asked what other models of open form verse there were, he recommended not Carl



FROM A CONVERSATION

Rakosi, not Charles Reznikoff, but of all people, Marsden Hartley the painter. And there is a volume of Hartley's poetry that's now out on Black Sparrow Press. So there are two poems, *Louistown Is A Pleasant Place* (description of his home town), and *Family Album In Red Plush*; classics, I would say.

**What famous poets do you think have been overrated?**

**AG** Me, ha ha ha. Old ones, I don't know, as a poet I haven't seen much of Emerson that I liked. Longfellow, obviously, but then maybe somebody will come back to Longfellow...

**KK** Can I answer the same question? One problem with anthologies is that you don't get enough of the good stuff and then some of the good stuff you don't ever get, like Smart's whole poem. But I think Byron's *Don Juan* is one of the three greatest poems in the English language and you can't get it in a short space so you never get it in anthologies. I'm not sure how many people read it. And the same is true of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, which you can't get in an anthology. Also some of the best poetry in the Renaissance, which is saying a lot, is Christopher Marlowe's plays, particularly in *Tamerlane*, which you never get in an anthology. So that's the problem of anthologies is that they're collections of appetizers and you don't get the main course often.

I just discovered an Italian poet I'd never read before, an eighteenth century poet, he's very disgraceful, he's the most pornographic poet I've ever read. But he writes sonnets, he's very very good. His name is Baffo. Guillaume Apollinaire wrote an essay about him and translated

his poems. I've been trying to translate them but they're just about impossible because he writes in Venetian dialect. Anyway, that's just some sort of a novelty in poetry, the works of Baffo. He has a great name, doesn't he?

In the twentieth century, I think that one of the best American poets is a man named John Wheelwright, whom almost nobody reads. Aside from John Ashbery and Fairfield Porter, I hardly know anybody else who's ever read him, though his books were published. There was a collected poems published by New Directions.

**AG** Rexroth liked Wheelwright, and promoted his memory in San Francisco.

**KK** There's also a poet named David Shubert, a twentieth century poet, another one who died young like Wheelwright. There's an anthology of Shubert's work which was brought out by Ted Weiss, he's very good.

The poetry of Thomas Hardy is not read as much as it should be. I mean it's terribly good, but when one says should about poetry, one really doesn't know what one is talking about. That is to say, Hardy should occupy as much space as a lot of poets who occupy more. Paul Valery said on the subject that it's not true that nobody likes poetry. There are lots and lots of people who like poetry, but there are very few people for whom poetry is necessary. So for those for whom it's necessary, they ought to read Hardy.

Oh, poets who have been overrated. Oh fame is so brief and so peculiar, it's very hard to tell. I don't think Allen's overrated. I'm not going to mention anyone in the twentieth century, there are quite a few who have been overrated.

What do you statement that... questions?

**AG** Well!

**KK** I.A. Richards music of poetry stunner, isn't it?

**AG** Yeah. But the primary element melapoeia, the phanopoeia, the eye. Now what do

**KK** That the primarily intellectual

**AG** That the music, so to

**KK** I think should change the meaning an example: I baby poet, that the English language thee to a summer about the "ays." to bay, there's no pare thee to a nothing there, intellectual.

**Have Beat poets**

**AG** What distinction from other content thought was, all pot.

**KK** All I remember is that I wrote Election, which Gelber's play, Connection was the Living Theater for the dope to all about people for the vote to and we had Ni Kennedy on stage do you remember

**AG** No, I was had short term

**KK** It starts off who supposedly a play within Allen plays the supposed to be Beatniks, and so I wanted to actually in the dropped out a but I well remember when I said to on like Lion you, WHY do

What do you think of I.A. Richard's statement that... why am I asking you questions?

**AG** Well!

**KK** I.A. Richard's statement that the music of poetry is intellectual, that's a stunner, isn't it?

**AG** Yeah. Bunting's view was that the primary element should be the melapoeia, the music. Pound's was phanopoeia, the image on the mind's eye. Now what does Richards say?

**KK** That the music of poetry was primarily intellectual.

**AG** That the ideas, or the logopoeia is the music, so to speak?

**KK** I think so, yeah. Look, if you change the meaning slightly, I'll give you an example: I was told when I was a baby poet, that the most beautiful line in the English language is "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day." And people talk about the "ays." Well if you change day to bay, there's no music left; "shall I compare thee to a summer's bay?" There's nothing there, so the music is partly intellectual.

#### **Have Beat poets written Beat poems?**

**AG** What distinguishes beat poetry from other contemporary forms? My first thought was, all the beat poets smoked pot.

**KK** All I remember about beat poetry is that I wrote a little play called The Election, which was a parody of Jack Gelber's play, The Connection. The Connection was all about people down at the Living Theatre sitting around waiting for the dope to come, and my play was all about people sitting around waiting for the vote to come. This was in 1960, and we had Nixon and Eisenhower and Kennedy on stage and Allen was in the—do you remember being in this play?

**AG** No, I was smoking too much pot. I had short term memory loss, ha ha.

**KK** It starts off with some guy, the poet who supposedly has written this play; it's a play within a play within a play. And Allen plays the poets' friend, and he's supposed to be — this was a time of the Beatniks, and I had the Ur-Beatnik there, so I wanted to use him. So Allen was actually in the first show, and then dropped out and we got somebody else, but I well remember the dress rehearsal, when I said to Allen, Allen was coming on like Lionel Barrymore, "Why do you, WHY do you...tell me this?" And I

said, "Allen, can't you be a little more beat?" And do you remember what you said to me, you said, "Kenneth, are you trying to typecast me?" (Laughs) Anyway, that's my main memory of the Beat movement.

#### **Have poets of the New York school written New York school poems?**

**KK** Well, that's for a critic to decide. I mean if a critic wants to create a school where there was none, that's ok. That is to say, there was no school because there was no manifesto...

**AG** Personism, there was Personism.

**KK** Frank wrote that as a joke.

**AG** Yeah, but it wound up being a big, serious manifesto. And, you know, it was taken so by critics.

**KK** I know. By whom?

**AG** Critics.

**KK** I didn't hear anything.

**AG** Alright. Did you see any common theme or form?

**KK** In the early work of John Ashbery, Frank O'Hara and Kenneth Koch, yes.

**AG** And Schuyler?

**KK** Schuyler came in a little later, but I saw the same things. But I saw it more clearly in the beginning. We were pretty much alike (in certain ways) for about five or seven years.

**...what I wanted was for every line to be exciting and for every two lines to be exciting and I was always finding out what I was saying in the poem by writing the poem. I never knew in advance. -- K. Koch**

**AG** What was the likeness? What was the common element?

**KK** We paid a lot of attention to the surface of the poem, to the language. I can't speak for these guys, John would deny everything I said, since he's always claiming there is no New York school, and I suppose there isn't. But anyway, what I wanted was for every line to be exciting and for every two lines to be exciting and I was always finding out what I was saying in the poem by writing the poem. I never knew in advance. And we were all interested in music and dance and opera and painting particularly.

We all knew French, we were influenced by French poetry. Mainly I think we were influenced by each other.

I was at Harvard with John and he said to me one day that he just read Alfred Jarry, and he decided that our work should be crazier, so we took that to heart. We sort of thought that you guys were a little too close to the ordinary reality, but then we all got to be friends anyway.

**AG** What I thought was the common element was the French wildness or craziness, but applied in a very common way to personal relationships, friendships, hyperbole among tea party friends. And gossip...

**KK** That's particularly true of Frank. I think your poetry was closest to Frank's in that respect. The main thing it had in common was that it was colloquial, it was talk and it wasn't the dreary stuff which everybody was publishing.

**AG** I thought the common element was interest in Williams and the vernacular and idiom. That's what Frank said, and that's what was the common element between the Beat school, the Projected Verse people, Black Mountain and the New York school and the North West's Snyder and Whalen. Everybody had some reference to the transformation of the diction and the rhythms into vernacular rhythms and/or spoken cadences and idiomatic diction.

**KK** There was something about the subject matter. The academic poets were always taking some small thing like a drug store or the bus or some little incident and buliding this big structure around it that it represented everything. We all had that in common, that we didn't do that. That was nice. As far as the public goes, it was Allen that got us all on the good list of poets because after Howl came out, Allen was one of the most sought after men in America. And I remember when you were interviewed for the New York Times and you gave a list of fifteen poets that everybody should read and you were kind enough to include us on it so we got a step up there.

**AG** Well I thought it was a united front against the academic poets to promote a vernacular revolution in American poetry beginning with spoken idiom against academic official complicated metaphor that had a logical structure derived from the study of Dante...

**KK** Couldn't we talk about the differences a little bit, just to be a little more straightforward here?

**AG** Ok. Well you were ga-ga.

**KK** You must've thought sometimes, that at least some of the work of the poets of the New York school was a little bit off the subject and irresponsible, and silly and effete and so on.

**AG** Yes, I did often, yeah.

**KK** How mad did it make you?

**AG** Not very mad.

...I depend on the first inscription for structure and basic ideas, and anything I left abstract or didn't really explain, then I try to fill in...  
-- A. Ginsberg

**KK** Do you know what the New York poets sort of felt might be a limitation on you guys?

**AG** Yeah, too parochial. Americanist in a kind of, not vulgar, but a kind of provincial way. Not sufficiently exposed to Roussell, Jarry and others. And too much narcissistic, involved in each other's self-mythologization, to the exclusion of other people, and maybe a little too vulgar in the handling of fuck, shit, piss, motherfucker and all that.

**KK** Ok. Anyway, I thought that you put the words on the subject matter a little too fast, so that you don't get any of the mysterious evocative powers that the words have if you let them alone a little bit. So that you could make a social criticism absolutely dazzling but it remained a social criticism. It didn't set out for the stars or anything. I'm aware that it's very

hard to do them both at the same time.

You said that you regretted that there were the poetry wars and I always thought that it was a great idea except that we didn't win decisively enough. Well, why did you think the poetry wars were a bad idea?

**AG** Well I have this little boy scout idea that they would all accept this new genius that was coming in and acknowledging it.

**KK** How did that work out?

**AG** Well Robert Lowell did, you know he was the head of the academics. He did accept Williams and start changing his style, and he was very fond of Gregory, and friendly with me, finally. But now you've got the Academy of American Poets in one place, and St. Mark's in another.

**Do you think "first thought, best thought" is still a valid approach to writing poems? Why or why not?**

**AG** I think it's a valid approach. I don't know if it's the final finish.

**KK** It's not always the best thought, obviously. I remember once I was at some reading for Poetry magazine in Chicago, and somebody came up from the newspaper and said, "Mr. Koch, can you write poems spontaneously?" Now can you imagine any other way to write? I mean, how else would you have to write? You sort of wait, what would you do, go looking for the words in a dictionary?

**AG** You use a rhyming dictionary, a dictionary of antonyms and synonyms and you figure out your main image in advance and then you work it out.

**KK** No, I think the first thought is always the first thought, and it's great, but then you have to revise.

**AG** You revise much?

**KK** All the time.

**AG** I didn't know that.

**KK** You told me once about twenty years ago, God help us, or thirty years ago that you had decided that because you were a poet, everything you wrote was poetry, so you didn't revise.

**AG** No, no, I cut and I eliminate poems that I think are not poems, but mostly it's intact, except that I revise also. But I depend on the first inscription for structure and basic ideas, and anything I left abstract or didn't really explain, then I try to fill in like a bureaucratic form, you know, instead of saying I walked the streets, I'll say I walked on 7th Street, or I walked on a bottle strewn curb of 7th Street.

**KK** I want to say one other thing about that. Years ago, I wrote a poem that I wasn't quite satisfied with, and it began, "Oh this is like a day in Bergen Norway." And I showed it to Frank and he said, "It's good, Kenneth." I said, "No, it's not quite right." He said, "Why don't you take out the 'in'?" That was very good advice, so the line became, "This is like a day Bergen Norway." That's all.

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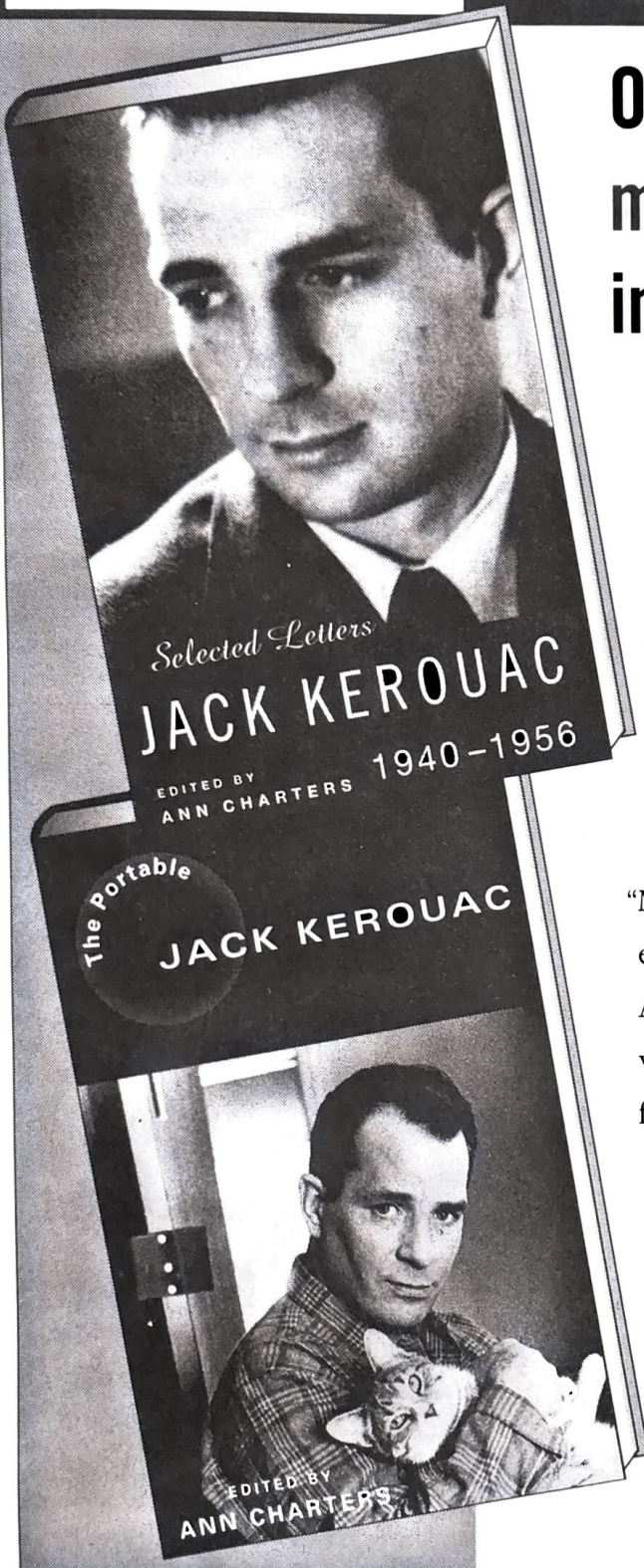
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# STUDYING HUNGER

by Juliana Spahr



At the end of 1974's *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, Sally, a lone remaining victim from an attack by a family of cannibals, is tortured for a really long time (it is close to thirty minutes, about a third of the movie). With a soundtrack of screams, she twists away from her cannibal captors again and again only to be recaptured. At one point, she stops a car to carry her away to

safety only to find out that the man driving the car is part of the Sawyer family of cannibals. This is what we call the return of the repressed, the human tendency towards repetition, towards reliving events again and again. Sally escapes this cycle by climbing into the back of a moving pickup truck. At this point, perhaps safe at last, her screams turn into an inarticulate sound that is some where between a scream and a laugh.

At the end of *Studying Hunger* on June 14, 1974, Bernadette Mayer writes:

*"So now I must kill him & eat him at this spot, so now I must kill & eat you on this spot. Settles the questions of 'yous' & 'I's'...I murdered David then, at dusk, in the cemetery and, hidden, we made a task of it all night; since he knew I had been researching it. He was almost dizzy, or seemed to walk funny. He had encouraged all my research, given me books on anorexia, articles on composite 'you', steadied my will when I was close to giving up, annihilated all guilt, encouraged the torture of memory, read every work I am writing, reexamined me, and remained calm throughout it. Yet in the end it still makes you scream. I mean 'one'. I have to stop addressing you. (70)*

In this quote, Mayer twists the metaphor of cannibalism and its concerns with identity (the modern horror film often seems to be arguing that if you can eat the self then what is "self" and what is "you" is no longer clear). It is not the "self" that Mayer devours but the "you." As *Studying Hunger* ends the "I" drives away, taking flesh to gnaw on the journey: "I bring some of the flesh with me to survive on, exclusively, until I am arrested." (71)

Here the difference between Mayer and all those heroines of horror movies, not only Sally in

The *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* but also Kirsty in *Hellraiser*, Sara Connors in *Terminator*, and so on, is that Mayer takes on the role reserved for those beasts of horror movies, those half human, half animal, often gendered male figures. Mayer has turned cannibal here. So the differences between Sally's and Mayer's endings are obvious. While Sally is victim, Mayer is cannibal; while Sally ends half-crazed in the space of the inarticulate, Mayer ends fully articulate. I bring in this comparison not because I am convinced Mayer stole and rewrote *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* from a problematic feminism to a more utopian work, but rather to suggest that Mayer's work is one that is wrestling with language as the Sawyer family of cannibals are wrestling with Sally. Again and again Mayer forces us to watch her wrestle with stream of consciousness, with dreams, with momentary attention. Again and again Mayer's text takes on the meanings of self and other to finally through devouring posit the "one." The power relation that occurs between victim and cannibal is one that depends on there being two separate yet similar beings. But when the you is devoured, two beings are joined into one. In *Studying Hunger* as the self devours the other, there remains a one that is multiple, that contains both self and other, victim and cannibal.

While I have begun with the ending, I now want to return to the beginning. *Studying Hunger* begins with its author's inability to begin. On April 20, Mayer reports: *gave up the project* (8). But she was, as she notes, *bound to start again* (9) and when she starts it is because of the question of who is the you. *You private person* (9) and she posits *Studying Hunger* as an explanation of



But when the you is devoured, two beings are joined into one.

*how they got transformed & where they come from* (9). The "they" in that sentence is without reference. I take it to refer to the way from the very beginning the subject in Mayer's work is complex, process-oriented.

"I bring some of the flesh with me to survive on, exclusively, until I am arrested."



Studying Hunger is a mutant product, something that might be an autobiography, centered around the way that life and subjectivity change from moment to moment. It is written as a mix of autobiographical confession and language-centered aphorism, of poetry and prose, of dreaming and waking description. Its content moves through reminiscence and observation and nonsynchronously through the past and the present. The text lacks conventional structures of continuity. Sentence after sentence appears without transitional reference. The consistent narrative voice which connects autobiographical event to autobiographical event is notably absent throughout Studying Hunger. Mayer does not conform to autobiography's traditional linear structure, beginning with early memories and passing forward to discuss life's progress. Even her most conventional and referential moments are details taken out of linear time. A process-centered subjectivity must be concerned as much with the conventions of representations of a particular subject. Studying Hunger is about, therefore, both its subject and the possibilities and limitations of language through which that subject is constructed and made manifest.

But regardless of whether or not Studying Hunger fits the generic definitions of autobiography, it does the work of reconfiguring the ways one can talk about the self. It is this that allows autobiography to remain compelling at the end of the twentieth century — a century defined by the contrary impulses of self and identity politics.

What is crucial about the subjective I in Studying Hunger is the way Mayer refuses to adopt a stable subject position as she writes her study of consciousness, her refusal to indulge in a rhetoric of self-propaganda or self-restoration. Mayer crosses absolutes of gender: *I fill me, I enter you now, I am man of before...* (11). She mimics to multiply and pun the I: *nobody knows the trouble I seen with my own two I's* (55). She claims different professions, states of being, and sexuality: *I am the rapist, the stalker, the shafter, I wear a scapular. I am the queer & the whore* (70). She even crosses the human/animal divide: *I am the leopard. I am the bear* (10). Mayer's claims allow her to be, as she points out *more than, or as much as, ones are several, & as several ones, & as they mix* (20). A major distinction between the multiple subjectivity of current autobiographical criticism and Mayer's fluctuating, but still in some ways multiple subjectivity, is this very absence of stability in Mayer's subject. Instead of a series of full, coherent identities, Studying Hunger offers a process-



centered work about subjects in progress, subjects continually resignified by writer and reader alike. In this context, Studying Hunger could be read as an example of how subjectivity tends to be, to use Judith Butler's word, "resignified" in works of women.

Through this attention to a process-centered model of subjectivity, Mayer works to show that identification as a form of political agency is more complex than is often assumed. While Butler in an essay titled "Contingent Foundations: Feminism and the Question of 'Postmodernism'" points out that *[r]eleasing the category of women from a fixed referent allows something like agency to become possible and while she concludes her essay with a call for a consideration of the political consequences of keeping in their place the very premises that have tried to secure our subordination from the start*, she unfortunately never speaks specifically to the role of language in challenging these political consequences (16, 16, 19). But it is this centrality of language that Mayer makes clear in Studying Hunger. As she writes in the introduction to this book:

*And, a language should be used that stays on the observation/notes/leaps side of language border which seems to separate, just barely, observation & analysis. But if the language must resort to analysis to 'keep going,' then let it be closer to that than to 'accumulate data.' Keep going is a pose; accumulate data is a pose. Also, to use this to find a structure for MEMORY & you, you will find out what memory is, you already know what moving is.* (7)

Keep going — that is process. Keep going — that is what Sally uses to escape Leatherface's chainsaw.

A good example of how Studying Hunger keeps going is Mayer's play with the pronoun "you." What is evident here, in what Mayer calls "[t]his 'I' thing. And this 'you' thing," is that it is through language, through the attempt to capture the moment and the process of consciousness that absolutes of subjectivity break down. Studying Hunger, as Mayer writes in the introduction, is more about the open question of "who is the you. You private person" than anything else (9). As Mayer writes: *we asked how to communicate states of consciousness*

**"Here she claims to be moving through different states of being: 'I'm resting, I'm restoring, I'm gathering, I'm hunting, I'm starving.'"**

*directly through a mass of language without describing or remembering. And, we wind up with the question, who is the YOU in this work. Or why is there constantly switching* (24). The "you" in this work remains unqualified. It figures more as a metaphor for the reading process, for the relation between self and other, for the way we think about our relation to what we write. What allows Mayer to become so fully articulate and to break the victim topology is her attention to devouring the "you." Mayer is, for instance, always mixing the "you" and the "I" to deny their singular uniqueness. It is this long sentence that starts Mayer off on the project that finally becomes Studying Hunger:

*You sleep marie: save then for me, certain moments, I'm resting, I'm restoring, I'm gathering, I'm hunting, I'm starving, I'm you, you say: go on being, peering owl on top of fortress, sounding out, training sound to meet my ear, drive & mark time, suffer a moment to let me be like her history, object, she was determined, defies all laws & rules, is the language I bought from passers-by, sea crate full of junk & language twisting & twisting coil of all morning, I met that guy the guide & cast his bell aside, I'd rather die in sync with just random tones, just war bury baby brick, your foot's my foot, core, how late you suffer,*

core, how late, whispers suffer, suffer, whispers into the tape a running water sound at the bell rewinding a vision I got & mystery works at the door, if no one's there, I'll stay right here adding a picket to this pierce you/me clear through, I saw you, remember, we go through the greatest horrors of the world at last, I love you, you turn over, you don't really wake up, sink a shallows at the oceans deep malaysian sleep, I'll know new dance the boxed taught today, it's rare code words can sink a ship in the shallows, reform so dry a crease & saw the same crack in the dream before, sink down broad ship at dawn, hope plate, they hod it up to their ears, we years you go on. (9)

This long sentence with its attention to those process-oriented verbs shows Mayer playing with subjectivity from the beginning of her project. Here she claims to be moving through different states of being: *I'm resting, I'm restoring, I'm gathering, I'm hunting, I'm starving.* Here she mixes the "you" and the "I" so to claim, "I'm you, you say: go on being." This sentence well illustrates Gertrude Stein's dictum in "Poetry & Grammar" that *[a] long complicated sentence should force itself upon you, make you know yourself knowing it* (221). By this Stein means that your conception of yourself should be as complex and as multifaceted as the long, almost grammar-less sentence can be. This sentence of Mayer's illustrates the way Studying Hunger, through its attention to the "language bought from passers-by," refuses to invoke the transparent language conventions that are often used by humans to talk about themselves, the way her subjectivity is as complex as language. Rather than positing a capitalized self or, as much feminist criticism lauds, a multiple self, Mayer instead "Pierce[s] me/you straight through." This piercing creates a beast that is me and you joined by a slash and at the same time forces her readers to attend to and inter-

rogate the "me" and the "you" and their ways of interpreting and reading themselves. The result of this multiply valent text is that a different sort of personal expression is created when the "you" and the "I" are no longer separate, but instead merge, so that the "you" disappears and language's relation to the self is mutated. And when autobiography or other forms of life writing can be as much about the "you" as about the "I" they become crucial genres for what they tell us about relation, about how the "I" and the "you" are constantly forming and reforming each other.

Ignoring the way language can keep you going has been a continued limitation in the way much literary criticism figures the relationship between the former (or what is often called the postmodern) and the political. A serious error of most popular models of political resistance is their unfounded assumption that the reader can only find interest or message when works propose fixed, absolute subjects. But numerous historical examples have shown how the positing of an unrealistically stable identity can have dangerous negative consequences. The white, middle class feminist movement of the 60s and early 70s, for example, found its model of femal subjectivity critiqued as racist and classist. As Studying Hunger indicates, contrary to most critiques of fragmented works, a splintered model of subjectivity has much to tell us. By devouring the "you," Mayer frees her autobiographical subjectivity in this relation. It is no longer categorizable, no longer under any one's control. Instead, as she points out, even the word "one" means multiply. It is the way women escape beasts carrying chainsaws by becoming a cannibal themselves.

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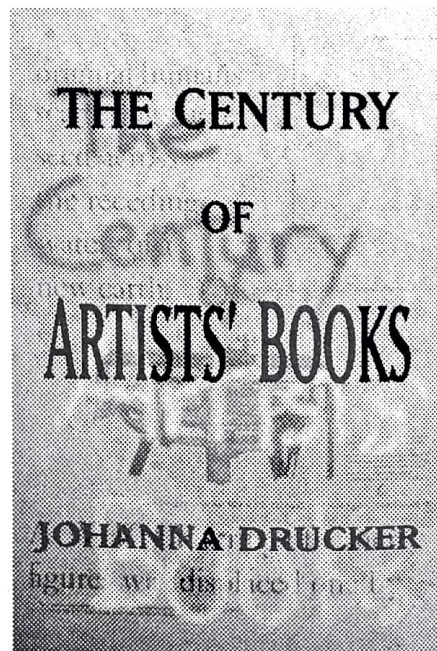
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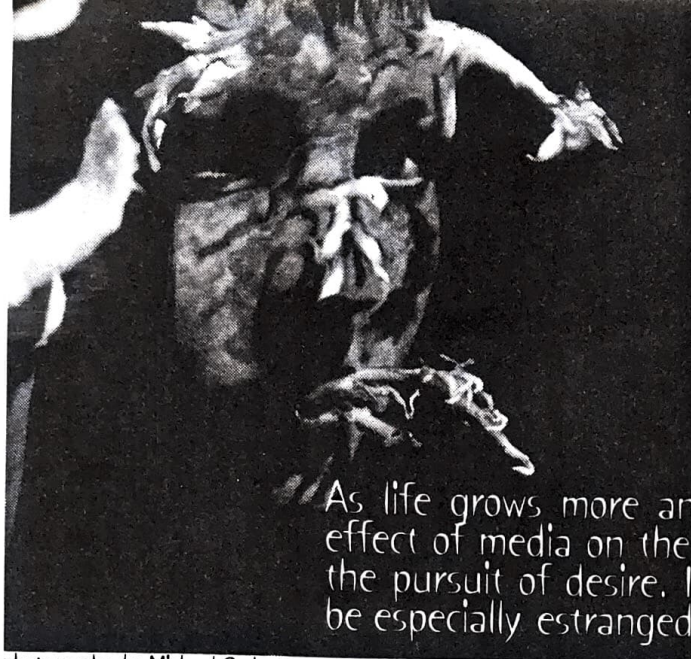
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As life grows more and more empty, due to the vacuum cleaner effect of media on the soul, metaphorical import usurps reality in the pursuit of desire. In the jungle too, where humans are said to be especially estranged, we fall prey easily to frenzied imagination.

photography by Michael Godsey

# where the bottos go

by Carl Watson

I used to know a guy that looked like a fish. He believed he was a fish, and he looked like one—a Northwest Indiana merman with a head shaped like it just popped out of a toaster. I thought he was crazy, but he wasn't. He said looking like a fish would come in handy when he was older and craving female companionship. He said something about Freud, Jesus and penises. He could make his eyes go off in different directions so he could make anything make sense. We were the only guys in our school who read books. I think it was him who first told me how dolphins were smart and could sprout legs and walk away from bad situations. Obviously we didn't read very good books.

As an example of the pheromonal powers of transmogrification, he would cite a story he'd read about a pink dolphin in Brazil, the botto, which could take human form and liked to seduce young women. The fish was said to go strutting about the docklands of small Amazonian towns dressed like a strayed Miami Vice extra. I never liked Miami Vice, so as time went on, I took poetic license, and where some saw a hairy-chested, gold-chained GQ cover boy, I saw a younger, hunkier Truman Capote (or Hannibal Lecter, minus a quarter decade). The gist of either image was the same—the cock-sure blond gringo look, a fallen caucasian touring the colonies in a linen suit and Borsolino hat, sniffing about dockside pick-up spots and the meat markets of Santerem, Manaus or Equitos, for fresh pubescent flesh.

It's always been my fate to be interested in things no one else cares about. It gives me good reason to get out of whatever town I'm in when things go sour. When I grew up and became gullible, I began to travel the world with no other purpose than to be fascinated by anomalie. Recently, remembering the fish tales my friend had told me, I went to Brazil, and I took a notepad. But despite incessant pestering, stories of bottos were not forthcoming. Many people laughed, placing the creature in that tall-tale category that includes Hoop Snakes, Jackalopes, Babe the Blue Ox and other fabulous denizens of the old bestiaries. Still, the fake roll of the eyes indicated most people knew more than they were telling...though some did tell.

One woman claimed quite seriously that they don't exactly turn into humans, but they are able to change their heads, and often show

up at parties uninvited. They flop on board boats or the banks of swanky beach towns when no one's looking. Within minutes they're buying drinks for the babes or boogying the wee hours away in all-night Amazonian ballrooms and roadhouses. Stamina is their forte, and where human men fail, bottos keep right on going, as if they ran on Duracell double-As. They are able to do this partly because they're not real. Also, apparently the odor of menstrual blood allows them to hold their fragile human form until sexual prowess releases the tension.

As life grows more and more empty, due to the vacuum cleaner effect of media on the soul, metaphorical import usurps reality in the pursuit of desire. In the jungle too, where humans are said to be especially estranged, we fall prey easily to frenzied imagination. It

happened to me. I was out fishing with some postcard of a kid. He said we could have more fun if we'd take the canoe across the river, and check out "the place where the bottos go." I 'imagined' some prurient intent so I declined. Besides the rapids looked fraught and choppy. Another time we were eating a large roasted rat in the suburbs of Belem (by suburbs, they mean an electric line running through the jungle) when the cry arose from the riverbank "Botto, botto!" Everyone rushed to see, and indeed there was one out there, making its way boldly against the current, no doubt in pursuit of new carnal adventures in the next village.

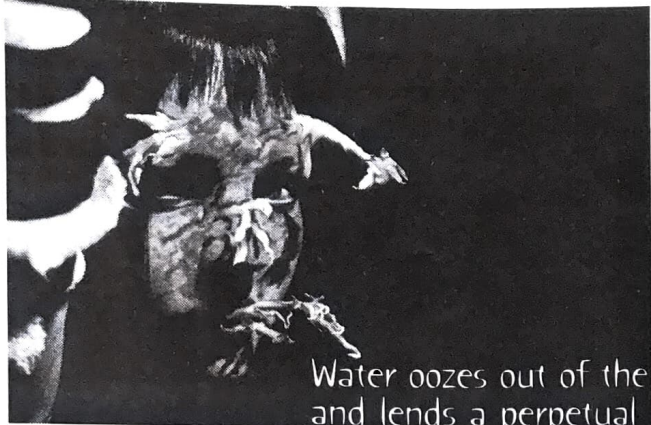
I say new, because apparently only days earlier this same botto no doubt had tried to make off with a village youth, Edwardo. The fish failed in its pedophilic quest, but in so doing illuminated the gender question. For either the botto's lust is AC/DC, or both sexes freely indulge in human deception.

Searching for precedents with which to frame all this information I found myself looking back to Henry Bates' theories on entomological mimicry, whereby the fashion trends of world rulers trickle down to become fads with just plain folk. And if, like the Roman Catholic Pope, some Indians wear mock fish-heads, or mitres, as they parade through the forest, can one blame the botto for wearing a human head, for making itself a strange mirror of its party-god/nemesis—humanity. Indeed, dolphins have a long history of consorting, empathizing and getting down with humans. The species name itself comes from Delphine the oracle, for they are supposedly drawn to the human voice.

And isn't it a coincidence that some other people are sure dolphins themselves come from another planet and live in cities under the sea, which may account for their large brains. And if you try to put all these facts together into an appreciable pragmatic whole, it doesn't help at all, because the facts simply change.

And why shouldn't they? They say nothing is what it appears to be down here, and anything you look at long enough becomes something else. Under pressure to produce the exotic the mind forces mutations upon the landscape. Lots of things look like snakes for instance. Rejection is another common problem in the esoteric quest. For instance, I was meditating upon a stick once when it walked away. You just have to get used to it. Chalk it up to schizophrenic nature, the belligerence of time. And, as everyone knows, the only way to stop time is with a camera.

The region is not lacking for odd creatures to satisfy one's Inner National Geographic Photographer either: Centipedes long as your



Water oozes out of the tiles. It moistens the mold and lends a perpetual stench to shoes and shirts.

forearm, curl like commas along the fairy-tale path. Dragonflies wider than a blue dinner plate, hover and dart before your eyes. Highways of leaf-cutting ants and herds of clown-colored grasshoppers suffer actual rush hours in the forest. You might step on an ant as big as your thumb, whose bite can make a strong man crumble like a candy-bar wrapper. What seems heinous can be a joke. But the innocent can rip your liver out. Incongruities are not what they appear.

Oh yes, and then there's the little minnow called a candiru that can actually swim up a stream of urine if you happen to be pissing drunk in the river at night. This creature, more famous even than the botto, apparently erects a circus tent of spines in the urinary tract and if you're not man enough to live with the pain you have to take a machete to your johnson. But then priorities are different here in the

basin, and voluntary castration is often considered better than having your legs stripped clean by schools of cute little orange fish, or being fried to a crisp in some backwater by writhing electric phallic symbols. As if we could choose between these fates.

It takes a lot of talk to get from one place to another, especially when there's nowhere to go. One night we were sitting around in the village of Nazare on the Rio Capim, a bunch of ethnobotanists and scientist types, with a few bums like myself thrown in. We were discussing many deeply sociological issues, while scorpions wagged poison tails in the recesses of the wood-framed hut. The noise from the bar across the mud road was a bit of a distraction because it reminded me how much I needed a drink. But I didn't want to miss out on any exciting obscure facts or animal sightings.

At some point in the spinning yarn of the evening, our host offered me a plate of bananas and white rice. I declined. I was having trouble swallowing anyway because my throat was swollen from a spider bite. The frogs outside sounded like they were betting on a boxing match. The noise in the bar just got louder and louder. More men were pissing in the road. The bullshit was flying so thick in that candle-lit place that even the bats were trying to get out of the room. Finally I grabbed my flashlight and slung my hammock in the manioc hut. But it was hard sleeping in the 400% humidity. The tree leaves were whispering like a thousand little canoe paddles through the overheated air, and there was that motion sickness that comes when you can't tell if the world is moving past you or you are moving through it.

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It is a sign of the apathy of nature that, like water or a good advertising campaign, nature always finds its lowest point, its common denominator, moving from reason to emotion, then on to overbreeding and extinction. That the botto is a water creature is merely apt. For the Amazon is less a river, than a pyramid scheme, a hierarchy of waters, where all roads are also rivers, and all rivers overflow constantly onto the land, into the backyard, the bedroom. Water oozes out of the tiles. It moistens the mold and lends a perpetual stench to shoes and shirts. It ruins food. Sound does not readily move here. In fact, the air is so laden already it is unable to hold more water. So the air pushes some of the water into the body. Joints swell psychosomatically. First-world types unused to the extra weight, become obsessed with fluid. It gets into their dreams, dissolving the borders of things. They can find themselves alone in the night, not knowing if they are asleep or awake, like colonists in a nightmare-land where the thick tropical silence presses upon each shape, threatening dissolution while forcing outlines of hallucinatory singularity. The equatorial dweller lives in just this sort of perpetual subconscious, where everything is equally real, eyes open or shut, a Freudian theme park from which the botto emerges in all its lusty pink and phallic splendor.

The final word on this fish is yet to be written, and it won't be written by me. An embryonic trophy, squeezed out of the promiscuous psyche of the Coboclo imagination? An ancient memory? Who knows. Some say that nothing within our memory exists whole, that it is composed of fragments stored all over the brain. Some say the universe is a hologram of all these bits from all brains. If this is the case, maybe the Save-the-Amazon gestalt is, after all, nothing more than a hoped-for recovery from some intolerable and increasing state of fragmentation, the recomposition of a jigsaw cosmology, or simply the neo-cortical assemblage of the biomass mosaic into something relatively aesthetic—that is before the whole mess slips away into the post-modern catalog of things that used to be. But then it's part of Nature's deviousness to trick us into thinking she's important enough that we should preserve her. It's manipulative. It's psychotic. And I don't like it. But then I don't have much to say about it either.

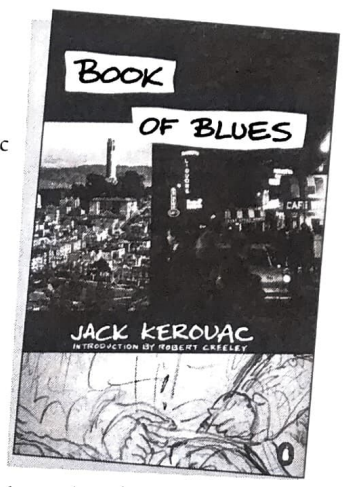
Indeed in a land of '250' types of dysentery, biomass is not exactly elusive, it tends to find you, like a bad detective, bumping into the obvious, telling stories you don't want to hear, creeping across your skin in the form of some fungus, or crawling inside through your mucous membranes to wreck visceral havoc. Whatever it is, it won't stand still, it does not sleep.

But some people do, sleep at night. Others just decay. Perhaps in the end it was not so much the botto for which I searched, but simply some affirmation of that transformative world, something beyond the claustrophobic existence I had left in New York. And I guess I found it. For even now in the comfort of my home, I continue to wake in the night. Holding my arm out to the acidic illumination of the moon, I see the more than 1,000 tributaries of that stinking river reflected in my veins. And something is pushing, pushing its way through. Special effects? Memories? Something I ate? Or maybe it's the malaria medicine still flexing its side effects while it chews away at my liver. Or it could be the humidity built up in my brain, seeking release, a bunch of swollen liquified thoughts wanting nothing more than to escape their human plumbing, to spill out and over into that sanguine pool of surrealist eternities, that place where the bottos go to exercise their expanding minds, dreaming of the human beings who dream of them, and like those humans, wishing they could get out of their skin, a desire which makes them, like us, fine prey to their frenzied imaginations.

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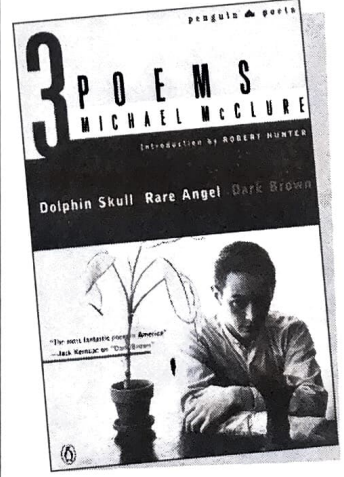


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Kimiko Hahn, asst. professor of creative writing & literature at Queens College (CUNY) was awarded the 1995 Theodore Roethke Poetry Award. She received the award for her book of poetry, *Earshot* (Hanging Loose Press, 1992).

**The American Antiquarian Society is now accepting applications for fellowships for historical research by writers & artists. The program is designed to enhance**

The Academy of American Poets is accepting applications for a grant from the Eric Mathieu King Fund. The fund supports the publication of poetry books at non-commercial presses. The deadline for applications is January 31, 1996. For guidelines & application forms, send SASE to The Eric Mathieu King Fund, The Academy of American Poets, 584 Broadway, Ste. 1208, New York, NY, 10012-3250.

**"For an anthology of women writers on cars & the road, I'm looking for poetry, fiction & essays. Previously published OK. Deadline December 1. Writing about cars ends up illuminating so much more: being a kid, being an American, families, learning to drive, not driving, "women drivers," fixing cars, breakdowns, the joy of the open road, sex in cars, drive-in movies, long trips, car songs, accidents, mechanics. I think of such themes as women & power, women & freedom." —Elinor Nauen, 27 First Ave. #9, New York, NY, 10003.**

News just reaches us of the death of **Franco Beltrametti** on August 25, 1995. The Swiss-based Italian poet, performer, visual artist, translator and friend of many European and American poets. Beltrametti was the author of at least two dozen books, including *Tutto Questo* (Supernova) and *Logiche & Illogiche* (Giona Editions). He collaborated with many poets & artists, including Tom Raworth, Julien Blaine, James Koller and composer Steve Lacy. A remembrance will appear in the next issue...

The Academy of American Poets is accepting manuscripts for the Walt Whitman Award. The cash prize is \$5,000.00, as well as publication of a first book. The final judge will be Jorie Graham. The deadline is November 15, 1995. Ms. must be between 50 & 100 pages in length, and an entry form must be submitted along with a \$20.00 entry fee. For guidelines & form, write to: Walt Whitman Award, The Academy of American Poets, 584 Broadway, Ste. 1208, New York, NY, 10012-3250.

The College of Santa Fe will host a Conference on October 8 through 21, 1995, called, *The Shapes of Poetry in the 21st Century*. The conference will feature panels, forums, readings, workshops and parties. Featured poets will include Joy Harjo, Arthur Sze, CD Wright, Alvaro Cardona-Hine, Jay Wright and many others. The cost is \$175 per attendee. For more information, write Jack Nutler, Director of Creative Writing, The College of Santa Fe, 1600 St. Michael's Drive, Santa Fe, NM 87505-7634, or call (505) 473-6200.

Kalliope (a journal of women's art) is now accepting submissions for their Sue Saniel Elkind Poetry Contest. The award will be publication in *Kalliope*, and a prize of \$1000. Maximum poem length is 50 lines. The entry fee is \$3.00 per poem. Any number of poems may be submitted. Submit 2 copies of each poem, one copy should have your name, address & phone number on it, the other copy should not. Send entry by October 15, 1995 to: Kalliope, Sue Saniel Elkind Poetry Contest, FCCJ, 3939 Roosevelt Blvd., Jacksonville, FL 32205.

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*The View from There*

The old boss was surprised when you ran into her on the street. Behind her eyelashes a model TV blinked a sports coach and a car. The old boss said, for instance, *Well I'm so glad things are going well for you* with genuine surprise. She rubbed at her eyelid and tried to revise her history of you, invisibly. But it showed. The lazy sky and the car wending under the trees, the library's false front: the view made a fit backdrop for hysteria. She thought she was in the clear; she was wrong.

*Old patrons know to patronize*, a sports star told the sports coach, although you could not hear him from outside the store. Herr Arbeit showed me the desk by appliances: eleven more forms to blot with dry snow, seven mock beavers to stuff. Then show. My work is cut out to a tee.

*Possessive Case*

*What are you walking the hamjammies for.*  
It's always the same argument. The man scrapes the moulting from his forearm and cringes.

The scabs become virulent in their saucer.  
The man harnesses their latent energy.  
The man continues to prick, pick at the girl.

Seven flight suits are pounding at the door.  
Words pound from seven visors. The words fall in the saucer and make a molten pot hash.

The marquee in the saucer draws waterbugs.  
Their inelegant eyebrows make needles for the girl.  
He *might* have been capable of love. Worth trying.

The giant engine with its pistons of lamb arms glides down their street on its skis. The pilots use their balcony for streamers. Cheers.

Scabrous wasn't such a big deal. Where's the oven?  
Under the spreading oak tree a steel filament blew.  
He puts his johnson in his pants and begins to stew.



*Sonnet of Alternate Starts for a Poem of Comparison*

These people are cockroaches, a coupla cockroaches.  
Those cockroaches kept the town on tenterhooks.  
Like bugs, the yokels won't go away.  
You cockroaches! Get thee off and how!  
Whaddaya doin here, cockroaches, whaddaya say?  
Without their creeping, I would have found --  
A cockroach might more blameless be, you think?  
O ya know daguy's a cockroach by dalook but he --  
Like their namesakes, they're drawn to sludge.  
Damn the cockroach life upon the lea.  
What bug shall I compare with you?  
You shittin me, you cockroach mouth.  
Anest, the big hies off the small.  
Cockroach yer a fool off the poohbah sled.

*John's Adjudication and the Trembling Leaves*

What you have seen will drive another,  
What the breeze brings will send asunder.

The stiffening palms will lie fast in the garden.  
The General Tso picnic will make fast a forum.

Come, the foot hies the sudsy pail.

Then the women tapped, disburdened.  
What they now clutch in the weeds doth ferment.



Independent filmmaker Warren Sonbert, 47, died on May 31 at his home in San Francisco, of complications from AIDS. His work is of particular interest to poets, and not just because he counted many poets and writers among his friends.

Warren's career as a filmmaker began in the mid-60s while he was still at NYU film school. Although based in San Francisco since the early 1970s, he spent much time in New York and traveled frequently throughout North America and Europe, making nearly 200 personal appearances at one-person shows of his work. Passionate interests in film, opera, classical music and travel are reflected in his films, which document a life totally engaged in art and in the daily experience that provides the artist's material.

The titles of his later films reveal a poet's concern with ironies and valences of received phrase — *Carrage Trade*, *Rude Awakening*, *Divided Loyalties*, *Noblesse Oblige*, *The Cup and the Lip*, *Friendly Witness*, *Short Fuse* — just as his earlier titles conjure up the mid-60s New York underground where he came on the scene — *Amphetamine*, *Where Did Our Love Go?*, *Hall of Mirrors*, *The Bad and the Beautiful*, — not to mention his life long fascination with Hollywood and the narrative film.

Warren's work is putatively non-narrative, not following characters through a foregrounded plotline, but rather has been called collisional montage. *Critics have tried to pin down Sonbert's cinema with catchy formulations...His works are not really diary films, since their carefully shaped contours are determined more by aesthetic insight than by daily experience, and to compare them with 'explosions in a postcard factory' is to acknowledge their boisterous variety while missing their ecsatic precision*, wrote Christian Science Monitor reviewer David Sterritt.

Of his own work, Warren said, *I think the films I make are, hopefully, a series of arguments, with each image, shot, a statement to be read and digested in turn.* Asked about discontinuity by David Simpson in a mid-80s interview, Warren said, *For me, one of the aspects of producing works, or art, let's say, is that there's definitely an element of disturbance, or astounding — sort of like some kind of conjuring trick. And one thing that's always attracted me about film, as opposed to photography or painting, is the ability to do that by removing an image and replacing it with another. And it's both an aesthetic and moral, ethical choice to do that...The works that most astound and influence me are the ones that I can't, as you say, predict...* Anyone pondering the affinity between Warren and poets could start right there.

Although film was his primary medium, Warren was just as serious and meticulous about his writing. His music, opera, book, and film reviews appeared for years in weekly gay publications in San Francisco.

Warren made 18 films, widely exhibited at arts, educational and cultural institutions in the U.S. and Europe, as well as at the world's major film festivals. He was honored by numerous retrospectives, by six Cineprobes at the Museum of Modern Art and six Biennals at the Whitney Museum of American Art. His films are in the collections of more than a dozen prominent archives and universities. He also taught filmmaking at the San Francisco Art Institute, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and Bard College, and gave graduate seminars at a dozen other institutions.

Warren is survived by his companion, Ascension Serrano, of San Francisco; his father, Jack Sonbert, of San Diego; and two brothers. For over 15 years he lived with graphic designer and art historian Ray Larsen, who died in 1992.

—Alan Bernheimer



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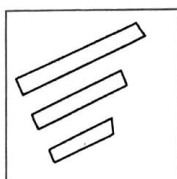
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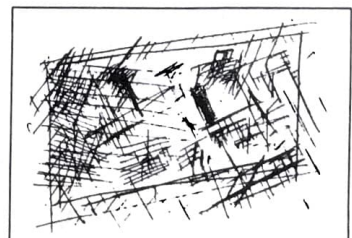


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# the poetry project

## OCTOBER

2 Open Reading, sign-up at 7:30 pm [8 pm]

### 9 Andy Clausen & Pete Spiro

Allen Ginsberg described Andy Clausen's work as the "vox populi of the democratic unconscious...[his] voice is heroic." Clausen is the author of numerous collections of poetry including *The Iron Curtain of Love*, *Without Doubt* and *The Streets of Kashi*. Pete Spiro's plays have been produced at the Nuyorican Poets Cafe, as well as for the Showtime network and the Met Theater in Los Angeles. His work is featured in the forthcoming film *The United States of Poetry*.

### 11 Paul Beatty & John Yau

Paul Beatty is the author of two collections of poetry: *Big Bank Take Little Bank* and *Joker Deuce*. His work has been included in numerous journals and anthologies, including *NEXT: Young Americans on the New Generation*. Art critic, essayist and poet, John Yau's recent work includes *In the Realm of Appearances: The Art of Andy Warhol* and a book of stories *Hawaiian Cowboys* as well as a new book of poems, *Berlin Diptychon*.

### 13 Writing On America: Re-telling Filipino-American Experience

Members of the Asian American Writer's workshop and the *Asian Pacific Journal* read from their work. Hosted by Eric Gamalinda, and featuring Han Ong, Luis Francia, Mex Mina, Ju Son and Reggie Cabico. [10:30 pm]

### 16 Anne Elliott & Mike Tyler

Performer and poet, Anne Elliott is the editor of Big Fat Press and the companion audio press Big Fat Talk. Mike Tyler has been variously described as "charismatic", by *Spin* magazine, "hyper-kinetic", *-Artforum* and "a post punk-rock philosopher and Edge City provocateur"; by *The Village Voice*.

### 18 Denise Duhamel & Tracie Morris

Denise Duhamel is the author of *Fast*.

## NOVEMBER

### 1 Robyn Selman & Susan Wheeler

Robyn Selman's writing has been published in numerous journals, including *Ploughshares*, *The American Poetry Review* and *The Nation*. Carole Maso described Selman's *Directions to My House* as a "tenacious act of faith...smart, sexy and touching." Susan Wheeler's first collection of poetry, *Bag o' Diamonds* received The First Book Award from the Poetry Society of America in 1994. Her poetry has appeared in *New American Writing*, *The Paris Review*, *lingo* and elsewhere.

6 Open Reading, Sign-up at 7:30 pm. [8 pm]

### 8 David Cameron & Paul Violi

David Cameron is the author of *Flurries of Mail*, a book of false translations of Baudelaire's *Fleurs du Mal*. He is also the editor of *Cocodrilo* and the forthcoming *Casper Weinberger: The Hot Pants Anthology*. Paul Violi's books of poetry include *Waterworks*, *In Baltic Circles*, *Harmatan*, *Splurge*, *Likewise* and *The Curious Builder*. His work has appeared in numerous anthologies and journals including *Postmodern American Poetry: A Norton Anthology* and *The Best American Poetry 1995*.

### 10 Three Films by Harry Smith

A screening of three of Harry Smith's short films: *Early Abstractions*, *Mirror Animation* and *Late Superimpositions*. Visual artist, filmmaker and designer, Harry Smith created movies which *The New York Times* termed "marvelous delirium...". His film work is in permanent collection at The Museum of Modern Art, The Anthology Film Archives and in numerous European museums and film institutes. Rani Singh, curator of the Harry Smith Archives, will host this evening. [10:30 pm]

### 13 Amy Fusselman & Shannon Ketch

**18 Denise Duhamel & Tracie Morris**

Denise Duhamel is the author of four books of poetry: *Girl Soldier*, *The Woman with Two Vaginas*, *Smile* and the forthcoming collection *Kinky*. Her poetry and prose has appeared in numerous journals and anthologies including *Mondo Barbie* and *The Best American Poetry 1993* and *1994*. Employing an improvisational style and incorporating jazz hip-hop and blues, Tracie Morris has performed her work at venues around the country. She is also the author of a collection of poetry *Chap-T-Her Won* and a forthcoming book of essays and poems entitled *Rhyme Scheme*.

**20 after yesterday's crash: Readings from The Avant Pop Anthology**  
Featuring work by contributors to the anthology: Mark Leyner, Lynne Tillman, Euridice and others. Editor of the collection, Larry McCaffery, will host this evening of over-the-edge fiction. [10:30 pm]

**23 Cathy Bowman & Laurie Weeks**

Catherine Bowman is the author of an award winning book of poetry entitled *I-800-HOTRIBS*. Her work has appeared in such journals as *The Paris Review*, *TriQuarterly* and *River Styx*. Laurie Weeks' story *Debbie's Barium Swallow* was recently published in a collection of fiction from *Semiotext[e]*, *The New Fuck You*. Her writing has also been included in *Sulfur* and *ACTS* magazines.

**25 In Perspective: Lectures by Bob Holman & Lorenzo Thomas**

Bob Holman, will present *A Talk, Interactive and Performed*, *Just a Moment*, *Poetry from Le Letro* and the *Church to the Cafe* and *Beyond!* Holman is the author of numerous collections of poetry and plays including *The Collect Call of the Wild*, just published by Henry Holt & Co.. Lorenzo Thomas is a poet, educator and essayist whose recently completed *Jazz and the Black Artist's Movement* will appear in a forthcoming collection from Duke University Press. Thomas will be speaking on the role of black poets in the current poetry "renaissance."

**30 Tish Benson & Shannon Hammon**

Tish Benson is a writer and performer who has produced her work at numerous venues including *The Kitchen*, *S.O.B.'s* and the *Fez*. She is currently working on a performance musical *Communion Blues*. Shannon Hammon is a 1994 NYFA recipient as well as a member of Long Island University's writing faculty. He is the author of a collection of poetry, *A Violent Imagination*.

**13 Amy Fusselman & Shannon Ketch**

Amy Fusselman's prose, poetry and drawings can be found in her own "lit-zine" *bunnyrabbit*. Shannon Ketch is the author of *Firm Brainlobes* of a *Small Town Angst* and the forthcoming *Alluring Stories*. His work has appeared in *Cocodrilo*, *Gathering of the Tribes* and will be included on a *Poem Fone* compilation CD due out this fall.

**15 The New Amazing Grace**

A musical event presented in cooperation with St. Mark's Church featuring original verses to the traditional 18th century hymn composed by Allen Ginsberg, Patti Smith, Galway Kinnel, Ed Sanders, Amy Gerstler and many others. [Main Sanctuary, \$12, \$8 for Poetry Project members]

**20 Kenneth King & Pamela Sneed**

Writer/dancer, Kenneth King explores the synergies between language and movement, he has performed his work at numerous venues, including PS 122, Judson Church and Poet's House. *The Village Voice* recently described King's work as "delicious friction, sensuous harmony and provocative politics." Poet/ performer Pamela Sneed has presented her solo performance work across the United States and in Europe. She is a recipient of two commissions from the Joyce-Mertz Gilmore Foundation and her work has been profiled in *The New York Times*, *VIBE* and *Reflex* magazine.

**27 David Allen & Xavier Cavasos**

David Allen is a founding member of *The Green Card Poets* and a slam champion at the *Nuyorican Poets Cafe*. His work with the *Brooklyn Funk Essentials* will appear on a forthcoming recording from *RCA Studios*. Recipient of the 1994 *Washington State Walt Whitman Award*, Xavier Cavasos is the reigning *Nuyorican Poets Cafe* grand slam champion.

**29 An Evening of Translation**

Walter Lew, Paul Schmitt, Rosemarie Waldrop and Bill Zavatsky present translations of original work ranging from traditional Korean poetry to work by poets including Breton, Klebnikov, Mayakovsky and contemporary writer Elke Erb.

# Poetry Workshops

## Poetry & Writing Workshop

Taught by David Henderson

Tuesdays at 7 PM, beginning October 17th

For beginners to veterans, preferably with manuscripts in mind. With an emphasis on new writing on a weekly basis and on previous work only as it relates to the overall concept of the formulation of a manuscript. Not just limited to poets. Prose writers, fiction, non-fiction writers, letter and journal writers and artists in other disciplines are welcome. The emphasis is on the poetry that exists in all writing, in all art, in all endeavor.

David Henderson is the author of the best selling biography of Jimi Hendrix entitled *Scuse Me While I Kiss The Sky*. His Books of poems include *De Mayor of Harlem* and *The Low East*.

## Alchemical Marriage: The Possibilities of Poetry, Performance, and Collaboration

Taught by Wanda Phipps

Fridays at 7 PM, beginning October 20

We will explore the interdependent and transformative qualities of collaborative poetry and performance. By using simple awareness and documentation of dailiness, writing becomes the process of recognizing the randomly falling turns of the universe as the only trustworthy syntax. This workshop will include in-class writing experiments, collaborations, journal keeping, guest artists and field trips. Musicians, dancers, singers, visual artists and poets interested in writing and collaborating are welcome.

Wanda Phipps is a writer/performer/translator/dramaturg. Her poems have appeared in over thirty journals, including *Transfer*,

*Exquisite Corpse*, *Oblek*, and *The Unbearables Anthology*. She has received a NY Foundation for the Arts Poetry Fellowship. Wanda is a founding member and dramaturg of Yara Arts Group at LaMama.

## Poetry Workshop

Taught by Maureen Owen

Saturdays at 12 PM, beginning October 21

Each session will focus on one poet's works. The workshop will read poems aloud and participants will discuss the works. If the poet used a particular poetic form, we will look at that and other examples of the form. Then using our reading/discussion as inspiration, we will have a "free writing" period. The assignment for the week will incorporate material from the free writing and is to be written inspired by the poet we have studied that session or poetic form we have been discussing. Each week participants will read their own assignment poem and entertain comments.

Maureen Owen is the author of eight books of poetry including, *Zombie Notes*, *Amelia Earhart*, *Imaginary Income* and *Untapped Maps*. She edited Telephone Books and *Telephone* magazine through thirty titles of the press and nineteen issues of the magazine.

Workshops cost \$150 which includes membership in The Poetry Project. This fee is good for one year and includes: the option of taking other workshops at no additional cost; free admission to most Poetry Project readings and events; and a subscription to *The Poetry Project Newsletter*. Participants may register in person at the Project office or via mail (The Poetry Project, 131 East 10th St., NYC 10003).

## BERNADETTE MAYER FUND

In October 1994, Bernadette Mayer was hospitalized for intracerebral bleeding, equivalent to a stroke. For the past year Bernadette has been in rehabilitation, first in the hospital and now at home. With determination and grace, Bernadette has made significant strides in regaining her strength, however, the process is slow and difficult. She continues to need part-time medical help and rehabilitation programs are as expensive as they are protracted. On Bernadette's behalf, we would like to thank you for your generous support over the last year and once again let you know that any financial gift you can contribute would help provide necessary resources for Bernadette's continued recovery.

An important and respected poet, Bernadette has been involved in the New York City poetry community for many years. She served as director of the Poetry Project at St. Mark's Church from 1980-84 and since then she has led numerous writing workshops at the Project and at The New School for Social Research. Bernadette has published fifteen books of poetry and prose, recently, *A Bernadette Mayer Reader* (New Directions 1992) and *The Desires of Mothers to Please Others in Letters* (Hard Press 1994).

Please make your tax-deductible contribution checks payable to: Giorno Poetry Systems/The Bernadette Mayer Fund. Giorno Poetry Systems, 222 Bowery, New York, NY 10012.

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# reviews



**The Weather That Kills. Poems** by Patricia Spears Jones, Coffee House Press (Minneapolis, 1995); 75 pages, \$11.95.

In my mind there is a pantheon of certain women poets of color and temperament. They are so close to (what I perceive to be) my sensibilities that what they write communicates to me way beyond the page or spoken word. The 70's San Francisco trio of Ntozake Shange, Jessica Hagedorn and Thulani Davis all moved East and became institutions unto themselves in various unpredictable and delightful ways. But there always seemed to be someone missing from that veritable pantheon. Now with the publication of **The Weather That Kills** by Patricia Spears Jones, the completion of that array becomes clear to me.

Jones is a reluctant voice, but her sensibility is closer to the Southern-ness of Davis — that clearness of expression that is so straightforward as to bewilder. Jones does not dazzle as much as she seems to be speaking clearly inside my head, making linkages with persona, phenomena and history that feel deeply personal.

The brilliance of **The Weather That Kills** lies in it's deadpan emotion, ranging between the tragic and the comic. This makes it a difficult read, because Jones is at the heart, at the bottom line, of black woman emotion. We get snatches of this emotional landscape all the time, everywhere; be it some young singer on the radio or a kindly elderly woman on the subway — and, ah yes, our kin. This emotion is as common to

what is American as anything else. But rarely is one admitted to the inner sanctum of a sensibility like Patricia Spears Jones'.

*Can a beautiful Black man  
become a pretty white woman?*

*Only in the heart, I answered.  
Bete noire laughed only in New York.*

Patricia Spears Jones is down with linking her stuff to music. "The Birth of Rhythm and Blues" is "From the Billie Holiday Chronicles," which just may be her masterwork in process. But her linkage of R&B with Lady Day and her own birth just about says it all. She ends the poem;

*Was it ever easy this motion of blood  
and mucus and dream?*

*First born and angry at the given world.*

*A noble operation for Caesar used a  
poor Black woman*

*already wanting to break this wall, as  
hand claps break a forest's*

*silence. Uterine wall collapsing,*

*so they cut my mother's belly and drag  
me out*

*wailing too.*

Patricia Spears Jones is a beautiful "new" poet who brings a wealth of years of thought and creative toil to the contemporary literary scene.

— David Henderson

**Book of Blues** by Jack Kerouac Penguin (New York, 1995); 274 pages, \$12.95.

I've been seeing people reading Jack Kerouac on the subway lately. Although **On the Road** sightings are rarer events compared to the subterranean consumption of the outputs of John Grisham and Anne Rice, it's a good barometer to measure the current Kerouac/Beat renaissance.

Twenty years ago my digging the Beats was judged aberrant and nostalgic by more sophisticated friends who spent their spare time parsing the nuances out of **Gravity's Rainbow**. Nowadays, folks seem to have lost interest in the current whereabouts of Thomas Pynchon; conversely, the paperback edition of Ann Charters' **Portable Beat Reader** is a day-pack essential among collegiate post-post modern literati.

Kerouac's current popularity may have something to do with how much the nineties resemble the mid-fifties; it is also useful that Kerouac's apolitical stance and "Avoid the Authorities" individualism fits right in with the modern temper.

What does get missed is the radical nature of Kerouac's writing project. And where Kerouac's radicalism is most apparent is within his rather substantial body of poetry. In his lifetime, outside of scattered appearances in small press magazines, his only collection of poetry was **Mexico City Blues**, a poorly received book that was immolated in print by daddy-o of the beats Kenneth Rexroth.

Kerouac's **Book of Blues** is the third volume of Kerouac's poetry to be published in the last few years. 1992's **Pomes All Sizes** served to demonstrate Kerouac's range within the small bit of poetry turf he staked out. 1993's **Old Angel Midnight** is Kerouac's most experimental text, an "endless automatic writing piece" that was so crucial to the work of Clark Coolidge and Ted Berrigan.

**Book of Blues** was put together by Jack Kerouac and serves as a prelude, according to Kerouac, to *the approach of the final blues poetry form I developed for Mexico City Blues*. Kerouac adopts as his aesthetic model, the bop jazz he loved so much. *In my system*, he writes in the author's note, *the form of blues choruses is limited by the small page of the breastpocket notebook in which they are written, like the form of a set number of bars in a jazz blues chorus...*

Anyone who has heard the CD box sets that collect the works of Charlie Parker on Savoy or Bud Powell on Verve — all the master takes, plus alternate takes, breakdowns and false starts will understand Kerouac's working paradigm. He goes from sharp:

*Inquisitive plaidshirt  
Pops look at trucks  
In the afternoon*

to dumb:

*Little weird flower  
why did you grow?*

to old American sound:

*And this sweet moth revised  
the entelechy  
in my endebechy  
in old pardodechy  
where Croo-Ba  
made it working  
boy girls in*

Certainly, there's plenty of drunkboy cantata and crude pathos sexism that

Kerouac declares the "Pure masculine urge to freely sing." But you also get Kerouac at his most open and his most swinging — his gift to run the changes on American English that few possess. In his moving and informative introduction to **Book of Blues**, Robert Creeley notes:

These poems provide an intensely vivid witness of both writer and time....What holds it finally all together are words, one after another, as he plays, moves, with their sound, follows their lead, shifting from English to Franco-American jargon, nonsense to sense, reflection to immediate sight and intimate record.....He was in that old way "serious". He really believed in words.

It's really in the sound. Which makes Rhino's collected recordings of Kerouac a crucial text and not an adjunct to the printed words. And **Book of Blues**, the best collection of Kerouac's poetry to be issued, calls for a reassessment of his poetry — itself long thought to be a very minor adjunct to the novels. Although there were writers who were working in the same regions of Kerouac's prose (examples being Hubert Selby and the forgotten Chandler Brossard), there were no poets doing what Kerouac was after in his period. In the years from 1953 to 1958 when these works were written, experimental writers such as Charles Olson, Paul Blackburn, Phillip Whalen and Robert Creeley were still working through the legacies of masters Pound and Williams. This work still challenges contemporary poets in its' casual shrugging off the chains of the ancients and the whole notion of "THE TRADITION." It imagines literature without academies, poets without creative writing degrees and, in Charles Olson's phrase, *a nation of nothing but poetry.*

—Joel Lewis

**Two books by Alice Notley. Closer to me & Closer . . . The Language of Heaven and Désaméré,** O Books (Oakland, 1995); 140 pages, \$10.50.

*we know no rule  
of procedure,*

*we are voyagers, discoverers  
of the not-known,*

*the unrecorded;  
we have no map;*

*possibly we will reach haven,  
heaven H.D., Trilogy*

*I remember feeling very happy writing it,  
waking up mornings with my dead father's  
voice in my head. Alice Notley writes in  
the preface to Close to me & Closer . . .*

(The Language of Heaven). *One never forgets a parent's voice and he just took over.* In a fictional dialogue with her dead father, she searches for new knowledge, a new birth, a new measure, a common mystical ground. Notley divides one voice into two and then into even smaller speech genres, the measure of her father's ordinary Southwestern speech and her own lyrical lines. As the father stumbles into speech, the daughter begins mute.

*I sit mute Nothing mutely  
—Flowerlike—  
I sit being nothing of petals  
be nothing And then of petals  
This new is new shape Any new thing  
is a flower A mute flower  
flowing color are you*

The father speaks of the problems for those living in the present, the fragmentation, the clutter of things between us, the dependence on time as a limit, as a schedule, the dividing of life into parts, the way our living bodies are "bagged", still in birthing sacks, identity as prison and armor. The daughter examines the contradictions, the impossibility of being a heroine, an "I" and yet out of absence and loss, she continually comes back to singularity, "me" with another, loved. She responds to her father's stumbling ellipsis and emphasis with poetry, encantations, enjambed lines, free of punctuation, beginnings and endings collapsing into one another. At one point within her search, she chants a radical manifesto—

*Change your Breath  
Change your heart beat  
But  
above all Change your mind  
Change the  
paths of The planets  
But above all  
Change your think-  
ing*

\*\*\*\*\*  
*Break all the un-  
written laws  
Destroy  
the song (15-16)*

To follow directly without hesitation, a single path or formula, can result in destroying that which might be loved most. The grief: one might be unable to stop the destruction. The joy, but grief: one can still sing.

*Oh am I born again as a soloist in a  
maddened heartless music Father  
show me My new birth A new birth (20)*

Her father offers help for the living. *Leave that supermarket . . . don't buy something, talk plain to yourself. Or Dream*

(36) *Sorrow . . . pushes you . . . towards god—doesn't it? (38) Listen to the dead, find a new thing, another way to think that honors fluidness and between-ness; to think with the knowledge of the dead, disturb oppositions, rip open the bag a bit, and undo like the flower petals falling from the poem, word by word, or the father's arms unwrapping her, or a dream unfolding. His ellipsis and emphasis becomes his. Mute, gap, they stumble together, an alchemy—*

*There are not two here, never were  
And yet  
company . . .  
Have filled me with . . .  
All of one  
med-i-um (64)*

Poetry here is the speech of heaven, intimacy, darkness. And yet to die is to finally lose words. The father considers questions of origination and definition—poetry, god, sorrow, beauty, reality, time, creation. One question opens into another; with nothing solid, no definitive answer—all is the pearl. The voices of parent and child separate, midway are joined together into one, separate again into "he" and "she," and then the borders collapse. And that's about knowing, her father says. To stumble is to rip the bag. *When I died . . . I . . . god . . . came into me . . . like clouds.* Heaven is a way of talking and thinking. Stumble talk. Magic. This is heavenly poetry. Where the borders of time and space are disturbed, perhaps irrelevant. He speaks: *I . . . can't get it into . . . time . . . (60).* She speaks: *This is what it's like to be dead/The words at hand, writing themselves (62).* A voice is heard *Be still child— Accept a gift, a new number, a tangled form, chaos, the creation over and over again, ness, being—*

*There is no Made Thing  
in the cosmos—It is all Gift  
If gift were not to imply  
a giver . . . God is  
gift not giver  
As well as you Are that*

The advice from the dead: *Don't try to follow the line of /Approach it whole.* The final beautiful poem in this sequence is a celebration of new knowledge—

*The measure of stumbling & entanglement  
is wholeness,  
is one man, or one stone, one  
soul.*

This new measure, entanglement & stumbling, occurs as loving, as a "die of love." (65) This is a wise and hopeful

book in which Alice Notley succeeds in stealing character and story away from the novel and giving it back to poetry in a radically different way. *You try to be . . . in a flash in someone's mind or heart . . . & that, that's heaven* says the father (21) This book "in a flash" was in my mind and heart. And that's heaven.

*And then I stumble into Désamère—*

*'I have such a sadness,' Amere says  
'As when a husband dies, magnified  
Till it replaces all that we were  
There may never be nothing more  
But this feeling, and then nothing' (80)*

In the second book, Notley breaks this sadness apart into a polyphony of apparent voices, historical and personal, remembering and reinterpreting the losses and disillusionment after WWII, Vietnam and the 80's. Her quest is to bring the playfulness and hope of Robert Desnos' surreal poetry back into her character, Amere's poetry, to affirm the mystical, magical, chance, revelation; to birth poetry again as evocative, to come out of the desert of rationality —

*Do you know the singing of voices in the mountains*

*The resounding noise of trumpets and horns?*

*Why are we only singing the refrains of imprisonment*

*To the endless sound of a sad alarm?*

*Robert Desnos Night of Loveless Nights\**

In the final section, Amère, the woman poet, writes a series of surreal desert poems in which the voices of bitterness & hope, Amère & Desnos are intertwined. Even though in Desamère, the horror of loss seems more concretized in image and story, personal and social history, there is still hope, haven, and possibly one is even closer to heaven—

Both *Closer to me . . . and Désamère* are tender and thought provoking poetic sequences that have penetrated my dream life, setting me adrift on a new voyage into death, dream, exile, hope. Thank you, Alice Notley.

— Barbara Henning

\*Lewis Warsh, trans. New York: The Ant's Forefoot, 1973.

**CHEKHOV** by Edward Sanders, Black Sparrow Press (Santa Rosa, 1995); 240 pages, \$13.50.

A biography in poems...when was the last time you read a biography in verse? Verse plays...yes, and ballads...though ballads are rarely longer than a big newspaper obituary. A biography in verse sounds like a 19th century vanity, a quaint form long abandoned. This book is not that.



The tradition here is the folk ballad: easy to remember, easy to memorize, a workhorse to carry facts. The ballad is musical, by definition, with its mnemonic rhythm and rhyme—and facts by that form's nature are made approachable and clear. Ballad brings us a world of white hats and black hats, where the label works as well as—better than—"local habitation". In a ballad, the facts might once have been complex: why, for example, had Lord Randall's lover come to hate him so? Was the world actually well rid of Billie Jo McAllister? But in a ballad that's not what matters. We can never forget their deaths. White hats become us.

**Chekhov** is not a verse play. It's a chronologically arranged sequence of short poems grouped in 61 sections. It is rare to find more than five lines unbroken by a section space, a breath, an asterisk. These poems are chants, choruses, narrations, and all of them imply a tune, as good lyrics usually do. Ed Sanders calls this book "a poem on Chekhov" and writes that he plans to do a musical drama from the material. The folk-ballad form is an alternative for history, and serves as a means to package a story against the danger of oblivion.

The story carried in these serviceable stanzas are facts about the life of an artist—the orneriest, most subtle, most trap-defying subject that a biographer might possibly attempt. What makes a person an artist? what makes an artist a great artist? what can we agree on about the nature of the work we call art? The artist is so difficult a subject that the most common or popular word for the core of the story is genius. *Chekhov was a genius*. The word in most mouths is meant to distance, contain, and explain what's quicksilver in the hand and befuddling to consider.

Ed Sanders has taken it on and has taken marvelous care to weave in social context and catch-up facts for the readers who don't know this particular history. He uses a parallel biography of Lenin as counterpoint throughout—and presents

no material too daunting for a junior high school library biography, nothing that couldn't be in a tired suburbanite's Broadway musical. I prefer the library figure because Sanders lays out the data without the kind of exploitation I'd expect from Broadway.

For example: the facts and images delineating Chekhov's twenty-year-long TB infection are skillfully selected and presented with a delicacy and respect so long gone from popular writing that you may be almost shocked that you're not being invited to slobber.

In academically respectable biography, by contrast, in the kind of treatment that would explore intellectual/aesthetic matters almost totally missing here, readers are invited to analyze and observe but rarely to feel anything.

A dichotomy like that is what the marvelous "Otherstream"\* tradition—calls bullshit. But Chekhov doesn't destroy this either/or construct by taking on both emotional and aesthetic/intellectual tigers. Naggingly, I want a different book or, put the other way, I keep wondering, why is the subject Chekhov?

One could make a long list of what Chekhov wasn't: not a political radical, not a social rebel, not a politician, not a scene-maker, not a leader or catalyst....The most exciting part of his life was lived alone in a room, in his head, in silent unknowable conversations with pieces of paper, working through processes long ago burned away like dross, leaving—obdurately complete—works of art behind. This most practical of angry men, whose need to change the world in which he found himself could not have taken a more opposite shape than Pound's, or Olson's, or Lenin's. Chekhov feared philosopher-kings. He surely didn't identify with them. Was he anti-Semitic? Yes. And no. Was he a male chauvinist? Yes and yes. He cared passionately about women's access to sexual freedom (and about being the happy beneficiary of same!) and he longed for

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freedom from physical abuse for all creatures including horses, children, and dogs. But I dare say he believed with the male majority of his time that women were innately incapable of advanced intellectual activity. Etc.

Charity was Chekhov's political action, charity, the anathema to radicals. Charity, so the argument goes, makes endurance of evil possible. Charity nurses the cholera victims and raises a private subscription to fix the drains in a local slum. Radicals want a reorganization that removes the landlords, erases slums, and makes cholera ancient history.

Chekhov shook down his friends for contributions, depleted his own often slender store of energy giving free medical care to the destitute, and sank money into libraries, schools, a sanitarium. But he lived under the rules as they were.

This Chekhov was a mysterious human soul. Are his acts a record of his (almost mystical) faith in the practical? Of a piece with the brilliant understanding of texture and detail in his writing? It's not put that way by Sanders. You learn facts in Ed's book but as to what the facts might mean...you're on your own....

A record is here: what Chekhov did during the famines of 1891 and '92 when peasants were dooming themselves by eating their plow horses. And how Chekhov was able to purchase a 575-acre estate in the winter of 1892. Ed's only comment on the economics of this transaction (could there be a connection between famine and low land prices?) is Ed's complaint about the "greedheads" to whom Chekhov had to pay "hideous closing costs" which brought the total price of the place to 14,000 rubles. The estate had a ten-room house, and was only two hours out of Moscow Beautiful estates that needed a good bit of fixing were also cheap in Ireland in 1845—but this is me talking, not Ed. What he shows us is paradisaical—long weekends in the summertime country, with everyone in Moscow's uptown lit scene jockeying for an invitation.

No, the presentation is NOT value free. White hats become us.

On the other hand, the ballad stance is nowhere more beautiful than when Ed steps back and lets us hear Chekhov straight:

*Famous Words from Oct. o' '88*

*The people I fear are those who look for  
a particular program  
between the lines and are determined  
to see me as either liberal*

*or conservative.*

*I am neither liberal, nor conservative,  
nor gradualist, nor monk, or indifferentist.  
I should like to be a free artist and nothing else,  
and I regret God has not given me the strength  
to be one.*

*I hate lies and violence in all their forms....  
Pharisaism, dull-wittedness, and tyranny  
reign not only in merchants' homes  
and police stations—*

*I see them in science, in literature,  
among the younger generation.*

*That is why I cultivate no particular predilection  
for policemen, butchers, scientists, writers,  
or the younger generation.*

*I look upon tags and labels as prejudices.  
My holy of holies is the human body,  
health, intelligence, talent, inspiration, love,  
and the most absolute freedom imaginable,  
freedom from violence and lies.*

(—page 116)

and Ed says:

*Th' reader must  
draw its own conclusions  
based on the evidence  
with complete freedom.*

(—page 116)

I read the third stanza over several times. And wondered again why Chekhov is the subject chosen by this popularizer, rabble-rouser, youth partisan, agit-prop master, trickster prestidigitator, and (in my mind) highly admirable opportunist? He and Chekhov would certainly have agreed on the importance of dental insurance...but why else?

I wish I could get Andrew Lloyd Webber out of my mind. Webber also uses big subjects for his musical plays: the revolution of 1848, e.g., and we get easy tears and "join in our crusade". It seems to me this chosen form permits no depth. That the language of agitprop is advertising language; the demand is for immediate apprehension and without the Wow factor it hasn't got a prayer of getting its business done because the forces of invention must be marshaled to make a set of words that can be remembered easily above the noise. At its best it is language as economical as

*One foot in the grave  
One foot in the glitter  
One foot in the gutter*

# A4

*A Magazine of the Arts*

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One foot in the glory  
One foot near the Grail

"The Five Feet" - 1984

But wow-factor language is an issue in this book. It's a big thing in Otherstream writing to whack down pretenses and to posit a natural equality between the speaker/writer and any ideas or people no matter how elevated they have become by historical circumstance or social niceties. Pound did it, setting the 20th century tone. Cut the bullshit and say the common word for it. Conversely, use any anachronism or invention, any slang or arcane jargon that suits your purpose (usually that equally).

But when is this technique cheapening? dismissive? trivializing? I can't say it never is. In this book, my teeth are set on edge by calling the conditions of Russia's rural poor "peas pov" — by calling a flogged prisoner "the whipee" — by telling us a play's successful first night had Chekhov's "ticker tick-pounding"— by consistently calling revolution "rev". Yet my ears and my humor are just as pleased by the smart reduction of:

Had a small  
studio  
built behind the  
Cherry Orchard  
to hide  
for ink-glide

(—page 159)

I also know I can rest easy because Ed Sanders has a respect for facts that never troubled Andrew Lloyd Webber. Thus, there is a veritable banquet of facts in this book to illuminate a person who may be somewhat misty to you. Especially if your exposure to Chekhov doesn't go much beyond a few local productions of *The Cherry Orchard*. A juicy chunk of biographical pie is here; excerpts from letters, diaries, notes: moreover, it's an easy treat; a damn good read. Get a copy and take it with you on the subway, or on the next glorious long country weekend you get an invite to. It even contains a very pointed 'do now' message.

Chekhov isn't otherwise given to exhortations but Ed begs scholars to grab the chance offered by the fall of the USSR — quickly because new history may slam the window down — to sieve through Russian state censorship archives. Every work Chekhov ever published was ruthlessly combed and pruned by the Czar's official prunes and combers. This was one of the constant horrors under which he lived. (The other was his TB.) The cut sections, perhaps even original manuscripts, were almost certainly filed at one time, against the

day the thought-cops might want to make a case against the author. Are any texts still there somewhere? Has anyone looked?

— Martha King

\*I've taken this extremely useful term from Mike Basinski, and wish to thank him.



**Decoy** by Elaine Equi, Coffee House Press (Minneapolis, 1994); 84 pages, \$11.95.

In **Decoy**, her latest collection of poems, Elaine Equi deftly collides bawdiness and faith, pop culture and high art, complexity and ease. The tonal and syntactic surface of her work is often spare and conversational, its logical trajectories seemingly resolved. And yet there are arguments within her arguments, a subtle questioning behind the aphoristic, and a sense of loss at the near edge of her humor. Equi's work embodies and deepens the multiple ramifications of a phrase often, and aptly, used to describe it: "deceptively simple."

In referring to something as "deceptively simple," it is implied that to be merely "simple" would be insufficient, that complexity has inherent value, and that complexity (and its attendant worth) is heightened by seeming otherwise. It is also one of the few instances in which deception is given a positive connotation. It may be not what it seems, but because appearances are often deceiving and mere, its very deception gives it the value of a deeper truth. In the phrase "deceptively simple" the perceptually misleading becomes the artifice of art. Illusion trades partners with truth in the elaborate dance of language. Such is the case in Elaine Equi's poetry. Not only are her poems built with a cunning attention to both linguistic trickery and perceptual detail, but she directly invokes the issues of deception, falsehood, and illusion, as well as their counterparts, authenticity, truth, and the "real," throughout.


These concerns are already implicit in the book's title, **Decoy**, a status Equi

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Terence Winch lives in the Washington DC area and is the author of *Irish Musicians/American Friends*, which won an American Book Award, and *Contenders*, a collection of short stories. He is also a composer and performer with Celtic Thunder, one of the leading traditional Irish bands in the US. Celtic Thunder's third album, *Hard New York Days* (REGO Records), was released in March 1995.

ascribes to a number of objects and theories, even to poetry itself: *a liar with a beautiful voice / that is often mistaken for silence* ("This is Not a Poem"). Here, however, the liar's voice is itself misconstrued, the decoy may well be real, the mistake one of our interpretation. Thus, Equi questions the very possibility of separating an object from its perception, of establishing an objective measure of truth.

In the first poem of the book, "Brand X," Equi describes sex as a kind of decoy: *as sex is a kind of violence // like anything / that pulls us toward it / even though we're unable / to ask for it by name*. This passage recalls the associations often made between intimacy and the absence of language, while subverting the assumption that naming is a form of knowledge. Thus, it reveals more about language and where it fails us than about sex per se.

There are, however, great pleasures in deception, in the very failure of language to accurately imitate the real: *as if language existed / 'a dis-figured voice' / outside the body // to be poured / from one container / into another // —the illusion of it!* ("Before and After Speech"). This kind of exclamatory exuberance is tied to the vast possibilities of illusion, both linguistic and visual, and also to romance, itself a kind of falsehood. *And with love's mask / in place / what world lies / behind the curtain? / In Rome it's true / there is no Rome / but elsewhere—plenty* ("Ah!"). Here, Equi's line breaks (i.e., the doubled meaning of "lies") contribute to the push/pull relationship she establishes between truth and lies, absence and abundance.

While love can function as a filtering mask between the viewer and the world, it is also the only real presence in a world of colorful kitsch: *I used to think love / meant being surrounded / by plastic hula-girls / ...in a place where / nothing was real / except our feelings. / The obvious authenticity / of them—why was it / so important?* ("Years Later"). And yet, the importance, in some sense the reality, of these real feelings is questioned. The question becomes not only "why was it important?", but also "was it important and is it still?", and remains unanswered.

Throughout **Decoy**, Equi addresses both the joyous possibilities of artifice and the burdens and sorrows of disconnection, of the rifts between world and language, self and other: *It is illusion / that weighs / a person down* ("Middle of the Road"). And *only we could get / that feeling back where / it's the landscape that moves / and the viewer who stands still* ("Decoy"). It is clear that we can't, and questionable whether such a feeling was ever the case, ever more than a temporary footing. In fact, this feeling is a lie, for to achieve it one must be in motion, must move incessantly to perpetuate the illusion that one is the still center of a moving world.

Equi's poems achieve this ceaseless motion, and it is perhaps misleading to quote so many lines out of context because her use of context (how one thing leads—or doesn't—to another) is a crucial means toward this achievement. For the most part, the poems in **Decoy** are logically and syntactically taut, their surfaces tidy and terse with the frequent connectives (*because, like, where, as, still, but*) lending an apparent seamlessness. When Equi writes "Half of me" ("Reading Akhmatova"), we know to expect "the other half," but know also that we will wonder which, if either, half is real, whether the self can be so separated, and how linguistic contrivance informs our sense of the real, its structures, unities, and divisions.

Equi's humor, inclusiveness, and flirtation are similarly double-edged. She is intimate, yet not overly confiding, and keeps a distance, from both the reader and her subjects, that is not disengaged but, rather, plays on an undercurrent of common knowledge, cliché, and pop culture. Even sex and death become cultural icons, the paraphernalia of daily life elsewhere transformed into potentially weighty images.

A series of transformations, both tonal and imagistic, plays

itself out over the course of the book, building a web of objects and illusion poised within a frame that hovers and changes as scale. The actual lobster in "Moonlight on Lobster" reappears as *the debris...scattered like lobster shells* in "Walking Away" and the "fox-colored" in "To Paul Celan" later becomes *the fox returning / to the fable's lair*, thus coming full circle, in "Complete Set," the final poem of the book. As Equi writes in "Souvenir," *You could say that / any household object / comes to us in the same way // compressing / all of history / into a swizzle stick*. And yet we do not stand still, objects passing in and out of view, but are ourselves moved past the window of reference: *These curiosities / bring us back with them / curious as ever* ("Souvenir"). Thus subject and object collide, simultaneously one and irreconcilable.

The question posed by **Decoy** is not, then, simply one of being, the real plucked from amongst its would-be's, but a series of finer distinctions, contradictions, and options, *a scattering of possible outcomes* ("Ordinary Time"). Intimacy, connection, even being become a matter of momentary resemblance: *...and it / is only stubbornness / that makes things / wish to resemble / themselves...* ("Status Quo").

These resemblances, and hence presences, are contingent on language, its ability to distinguish and liken. As noted, the frame of language, its continuities and gaps, is the source of both frustration and joy, and Equi revels in Bacon's ability to reconcile names with objects, a force against the disparate: *and to still find / in this world // a place for them [the names] / to mate / match with... // like a Cinderella / who is herself / made of glass // o empiricism / o anatomy* ("After Bacon"). Equi often dredges phrases and figures from the realms of fairy tale, myth, painting, and poetry itself, adding to the sense that the layers are all artifice, that the body at the bottom of the lake is, in fact, an historical fiction.

The Cinderella made of glass is an instance of such layering, of something achieving presence via similarity, and an engaging, mysterious heroine echoed by the stunning female figure in *Nuance, who struggles / not only to emerge / but also to sink / back into matter* ("Decoy") just as she struggles against *...the mania / for containment...* ("Decoy").

"Nuance," one of the most striking poems in **Decoy**, addresses these questions of containment, clarity, and deception in a manner both lucid and fragmentary. Here the emotional and intellectual impact of the poem is its surface, its telling. The poem is fully the thing (emotion, event, philosophical argument) itself as well as the response to it. I will close by quoting it in full.

*It started badly. Tossed out of  
the cart's lap for having too many  
loopholes. She wore her nuance  
like a noose to ruffle clarity.  
The sad beginnings and endings  
affixed to. Mimed briefly, then  
leveled—though this was just  
the tip of the thawing. "Ah, woman,  
that irony which makes community  
impossible." Cut down the middle of  
gender's root. The buzz of was. Its  
foliage intoned.*

—Deirdre Kovac

**KILDARE** by Stacy Doris, Roof Books (New York, 1995); 104 pages, \$9.95.

As i sit down, with a cup of freshly brewed espresso, to review this book i am curiously caught in the trap of where to begin. Perhaps i should dispense the advise—Ignore the back cover copy—it is way too glitzy & embarrassingly uninformative

(Charles Bernstein claims that *here you will find... the brain of Dr. Kildare's network arch-rival, Ben Casey.* [In your imagination Charles!—which is curiously the point of this review.]

Let me clarify this point—neither Ben Casey nor the workings of his brain appear in Stacy Doris's text entitled **KILDARE**. What does appear—appears to be a lot of words. These words come to us in that familiar, disjunctive, technique of post-Modern poetry, best described as, "Over-Heard." The book claims to have a narrative, but really it only possesses narrative technique: Two characters appear to speak; Syntax appears to form. It leads us forward. It does not narrate; the reader narrates. This is where Ben Casey's brain comes from. It comes from Mr. Bernstein's brain.

This is an example of leaving out:<sup>1</sup> *LETS UNCLE Input, capture, display // mix and produce // that's what friends are for.*<sup>2</sup> What has been narrated? i don't know, what i do know is that input, capture, & display are DOS prompts, & the phrase *that's what friends are for*, appears in a popular tune which is now used in a commercial for some long distance carrier. This is the strength of Ms. Doris's work.

On the EAR INN CD [**LIVE FROM THE EAR INN**] Ted Greenwald rants, *From now on take my / Word, my word for what / I'm about to tell you.* In **KILDARE**, Ms. Doris does not expect you to take her word—only her words—which are not "hers" anyway, but "gathered from the live air."<sup>3</sup>

Ms. Doris forces us to make our own way among words which take their meaning from our contexts & not hers. We have left the Modernist post-Whitmanian moment where meaning was to be supplied by our knowledge of a shared culture (a meaning supplied to us second hand) & *by a commodious vicus of recircumlocution, we return*<sup>4</sup> to meet him—*old grey-beard*<sup>5</sup> up ahead somewhere, waiting.<sup>6</sup>

These are Modernist techniques—The footnotes supply us with reference points, which divulge the cultural context (meaning meaning) of the phrases. This context provides us with the ability to navigate the intellectual trappings of interpretation. Remove the footnotes & you have post-Modernist techniques, which rely primarily on our participation in the culture & our recognition of ourselves in language, as primary suppliers of meaning.

How does this work in **KILDARE**? *Midair teleport // fakes out of nothing // icky reptile device.*<sup>7</sup> You supply the meaning; if this is a video game, what has just happened? Or: *Crushed the peach, in a strange osmosis. // (Sucks, Sucks longer.) // (Misses the pit. Continues. Gives thanks:) // Thanks, and condolences. // (Sound of slap. Pause.)—Again! (Sound of slap, limping.)*<sup>8</sup> Here bits of narrative structure—stage direction & apparent dialog—combine to suggest action. They beg us to pick them up, handle them, trust them,

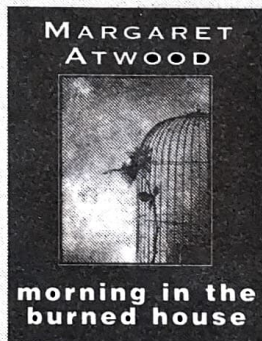
believe in them. But finally each bit refuses to yield even the simplest bit of information. We supply the meaning. The game plays us.

I am strongly reminded in this book of Ed Dorn's picaresque '**SLINGER**—sans "Bean" [Although it does have the "World's Largest Crackerjack"<sup>9</sup>—sans prize.] An example of its '**SLINGERness** might be: *Meanwhile, same Critter, // (far off and underground) wakens, stretches // and (thanks to poor planning.) // ... // unzips most of his skin.*<sup>10</sup> Or more accurately, Kenward Elmslie's **26 BARS**, *Six-foot, six-inch Hank Wurlitzer . . .*<sup>11</sup> *What's big boy's name?—Klink // Height?—Six-six and upwards.*<sup>12</sup> & like much of Mr. Elmslie's work, (George Tish also), this seems to be a "sexy" book—filled with body parts & suggestive juxtapositions. *EVELYN, all GUMS // (don't dare call her 'Miss') // REMOVES the TEETH, // INHALES every drop. // Hot boiling— // Why watch when you can lick?*<sup>13</sup> *Mysterious girl, her face zipped in red leather.*<sup>14</sup> *The General ("Dong's") Notebook // (Peek-a-boo sadistic)*<sup>15</sup> *She's nicked him // he's strapped her // she boffs him // he leaks/ he drenches her*<sup>16</sup> Then again these are only words & their meanings only mine. This book is a good game, & a great ride—Get your ticket & take it for what it's worth.

— T. Door., Roma

{1. Ashberry—3 POEMS}{2. Doris—pg. 30}{3. Pound—Canto 81}{4. Joyce—Finnigans Wake}{5. Pound—A Pact}{6. Whitman—Song of Myself}{7. Doris—pg. 39}{8. Doris—pg. 61}{9. Doris—pg. 37}{10. Doris—pg. 82}{11. Elmslie—26 Bars}{12. Doris—pg. 79}{13. Doris—pg. 72}{14. Doris—pg. 87}{15. Doris—pg. 49}{16. Doris—pg. 29}

## Poets speak volumes.



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**Heavenly Tree/Soluble Forest** by Gerritt Lansing. Talisman House Books (Jersey City, 1995); 213 pages, \$16.95.

This is a book I haven't been able to stop reading since picking up the (out-of print) North Atlantic edition some years ago. It is both immediately here and ineluctably elsewhere at the same time. Poetry's interest is at all points, hence no single point represents the whole. Similarly, Gerrit's poems have many different voices speaking in many places at once, and one voice getting on with it all at all times. It takes some re-reading to find one's footing in Lansing's world. The divisions of the book are not historically linear, nor are they necessarily like with like. The reader is constantly inhabiting "Gerritt Lansing's Poetry" as time collapses.

Reading this work makes me feel much the same way I did when first encountering Pound's Cantos. The frustration of what I took to be too much erudition and my own blind spots sending me to various friends and libraries with new reading lists was daunting, to say the least. Therefore, this is not so much a review of Gerrit's book as a review of my reading it. If I read the book for another few months and write another review, it will go on and on. Lansing's book sends me out in the field (in the sense of poetry defined as field work/study; a ground from which to move in and on). One could study these poems and their environs and measure the net cast over some thirty-five plus years of writing poetry. I also think of other poets and their poems in Lansing's company once described as the "Boston School," circa 1956 as "occult, unknown." Now this book makes public what a handful of people have known and learned from.

Some of the short lyrics are formal, sassy and composed like "Egg Breakfast," and they are direct hits on first reading them. These poems lead to the longer poems, which are mysterious and seemingly more "open" in their structures. Listen to the "ear training" in "The Castle of the Flowering Birds!" Song pervades the collection in new ways with each reading. There is a noticeable classical metre in this work, bringing to mind the Greek Anthology. Also the feel of Scriabin's late Preludes and the last fifty years of speech dialect come to mind. The variety of metres is as constant and consonant as the range of "subject matter" which appears in the work;

*This interval, discrepancy,  
does not lend itself to logic  
(because  
it must be declared,  
the mystery)*

*Logick equals Magick  
(I leave it to you to find out what is really meant)  
and in the phone of being where  
I swing and so will you...*

Lansing moves from common association to personal vision and this body of work makes entrance after entrance into any poetic so proposed. I wish to make the distinction between explanation and investigation — the outcome favoring the latter. It is fast and slow. It is the obvious and the hidden. Cadence and content overlap like so many thighs, necks and faces in the same bed, such that the book is a serial poem narrative from the elegiacal to the ecstatic. Here are the ancient myths and the ritual marking of seasonal changes. Here are love poems as tender and evocative as any in the language. Here are magic spells of great depth and power. Music turns meaning to the ground upon which meaning moves. The words speak how we approach them, as the life of the poet and the reader moves from figure to ground and back. I'm reminded of Pollack's credo, *technique is a result of need*, in the sense of a poem or a painting being an event or an enactment, with final, if not end-

lessly apparent field work being that "energy grid" Olson and Spicer stood on such different and yet somehow consonant ends of.

*By far the best of farmers  
Lovers are  
Whose bodies glisten in the light they make  
and throw so carelessly around them in molten  
afternoons  
Husbandry  
is what it takes to make the world splash in our heads.  
Exploding water light  
So nothing's unhinged,  
the far-fetched pleasure.  
By fostering  
the greenness comes again,  
new arising  
flower world  
sweetness suck  
naked verity...*

When Gerrit reads these poems, they become enchantments, the listener caught in the worlds of his making, similar to the effects of watching Kenneth Anger's Magic Lantern Cycle of films. The words literally dance across the page.

I decide to look up the references in these poems, and find that they include Classical mythology, Alchemy, magical literature (including writers like Ashmole and Crowley) and the writings of his peers (such as Spicer, Jonas, Blaser, Duncan, Olson, Kelly, Elmslie and Rattray). It is ultimately meaningless to go on with lists of names of his fellow travellers. But how is one to approach criticism other than to register one's reading life via the poems? Otherwise, we read the staid academic stuff of rhetoric and hypothetical regard, e.g. is one's mind made up or just reciting various takes, and then talking to one's self which begs the question — what of the work speaks back?

**Heavenly Tree/Soluble Forest** is one of a handful of books that shows how poetry is written. Like Blaser's **The Holy Forest**, this is the work of a poet whose work has been unavailable for far too long. There was an earlier (and shorter) version of this book published in 1978 by North Atlantic Press, entitled, **The Heavenly Tree Grows Downward**. Long since out of print, this edition brings the manuscript up to date.

At a recent reading, Gerrit apologized for not reading much new work. As it turns out, he is not a prolific poet. But when I pick up the books of many of the prolific poets writing today, I just gobble them up. On the other hand, when I read the works of Gerritt Lansing, whose moderate collection gathers 30 or 40 years of writing, I move slowly through, looking forward to the rest of my life where I can read them.

— Eric Malone

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**Ameresque** by Robert Fitterman, Buck Downs Books (Washington D.C., 1994); 47 pages, \$6.00

Rob Fitterman's Ameresque, meditations on the works of David "Snap" Wyatt (1905-1984), a master of circus banner painting, is like so many trapeze trips between various plateaus. Coincidental tours of Wyatt's grotesquery become journeys in the American zone, making the book an expansive, truly American operation, reminiscent at times of Oppen and Zukofsky, the former coming through in the objectivist way Fitterman literally writes things out (long-hand and short, lyrical and anti-lyrical), leaving them with you, engineered into language, by-passing the mimetic or representational role, for that of writing as a material production of sound, letters, figures; text instead of an artifact:

A Modeled  
city at your  
fingertips topple em  
Panorama East the Exquisite  
lifts its thin Gulf + Western  
Plan 10 take this down  
as if money had an  
elegance Deposit early  
American Statue Ashtray

while Zukovsky surfaces in the music and the figures. Compare these openings:

Boy In A Jar

this is a sonnet called  
otherwise a looming  
spells thee a mess got  
What sin is — part fit  
Part fused like the end  
of time's own problems

"A" 19

An other  
song — you  
want another  
encore I

hear back-  
stage the  
stagehand's late  
the stage's  
moon his  
sufferance of  
lights footcandles  
mind pines

Here is also a performance of language that creates a distance that the reader must occupy, like a history of reading, in dealing with the task of observation and appropriation that prefigures the text: *had it with no meaning / and had it with meaning / and how meaning not to get had* (Ossified Man); also, *Sometimes eyes oscil-late — / Sometimes it's all just tricks — / Sometimes I think I'm dishonest — / Sucker!* (The Human Pincushion). The poet's deference to P.T. Barnum is perfect and inevitable in this respect, in that writing is often as much a con game as it is communication, another study in Americanism (see Melville's The Confidence Man or the works of W.S. Burroughs) — not that you'd ever be short-changed by Ameresque, though it is certainly sometimes saying one thing and doing another, and is bound to confuse occasionally with some knotty language, it all seems par-for-the-course; you may *slip I mean slip / and fall really fall* but you'll always find some subtext to land on, keeping you on your feet. You'll be helped along as well, no doubt, by a series of illustrations by the Artist, Don Colley, that bring to mind Wyatt's works and compliment the writing quite brilliantly and unexpectedly.

— Robert V. Hale

**The Human Abstract**, by Elizabeth Willis, Penguin (New York, 1995); 83 pages, \$12.95

When I asked Elizabeth Willis if I'd have to read St. Augustine in order to review her new book **The Human Abstract** she said "No, but you will have to read all of **Being and Time**." I didn't believe her so I read St. Augustine instead, but somehow the reference to Heidegger never escaped me. Maybe it's because **The Human Abstract** is a book that gathers together (and pulls apart) ideas of "being" in a space-"time" continuum also known as the human condition. To make a crude analogy, Willis's work functions in the way the best episodes of Star Trek do, challenging our perceptions of self in relation to our immediate surroundings and our concepts of linear history. I tend to think of Elizabeth Willis as a visionary poet of the late twentieth century. What makes **The Human Abstract** interesting is that it picks up on a line of "generative orders" of visionary poetry and leads the reader to an

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uncharted place, speaking of and to a new generation of American writers. Willis may have been born in the Middle East but she's as Middle West as *three antelope striding/down the streets of Laredo*. She's also as campy as the lines that emerge as if from a movie she'd surely star in—*So Billy, shoot me now, and so on/in front of all those presidents*. That's the axis from which her poems coalesce into a new vision. The attentions are articulated out of a close-to-the-millennium point of reference. It's a place where one's surroundings may be defined not only as matter or material, but also as the energy which supplies a link between objects and their atoms. There's something spectacular and terrifying about the whole idea—where an individual emotional life brushes up against a physical universe, where if *night is going 200 miles an hr/as usual* it makes sense that *in this way we find/we are suddenly altered*. It has a little bit to do with relativity theory and a little bit to do with the pioneer spirit—like jumping on a fast moving train to see if you can really reach a dimensional shift. Willis's work is a journey through a dangerous place—a place we all occupy, complete with planes *from which/bombs scatter*

*like Havana cigars*. The funny thing about being on the verge of (or under the arc of) disaster is that it's strangely exhilarating, a place where one will inevitably "fall glorious." Take Robert Duncan's 1965 description of the personal and/or atomic apocalypse—...*the thing we know deep within ourselves as the great promise, that great threat/promise that we will simply all be reduced/increased to sheer energy and matter—is that then we suddenly realize that this is the great wonder anyway, that we are sheer energy and matter...* **The Human Abstract**, though is not simply a study of physical phenomenon, rather it attempts to reconcile the information of the physical/outside world and the information of the gut feeling, moving from logic to I and "from 'I' to logic." The content of these explorations are reflected throughout in the form of the work—lines dashed to bits, or maybe it's that a tension emerges where each statement resists gravity, as though the author's task was to anchor each line to the page. A multiplicity of voices emerge, some set off by italics, others by parentheses, and others disappearing all together—*Beside this I my silence is a sister/of uncanny omissions*. Willis allows language to work

for her and she allows language to work in spite of her, as palimpsests occur not only in the structure of words but also in the ideas of who one is and where one is. Like H.D., she focuses on a series of endless immediates. But the melody that emerges is all her own, and that's what I knew nearly a decade ago when I began to read her work. I was never quite sure how she did it, and I sometimes thought that she didn't know how she did it either. In retrospect, I was just naive—Willis's ear is informed by a conglomerate of sources ranging from the Rossetis to the Language school. One of the questions posed in **The Human Abstract** is how to find some order out of what seems like the chaos of a world that works against our best intentions, public and private. Willis gets down to the building blocks to better understand the composite wholes of language, the physical body, and the world, because it's true that *we share electrons, not vistas, nyway,*" and it's also clear in **The Human Abstract** that *the work of love and the work of art/has no sleeping part*.

— Lisa Jarnot

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## BOOKS RECEIVED

Julia Alvarez, **The Other Side**, Dutton (New York, 1995); 155 pages, \$18.95.

A collection of poems from the acclaimed novelist. Check out the fantastic Bilingual Sestina which opens this book!

Anne Carson, **Plain Water: Essays and Poetry**, Alfred A. Knopf (New York, 1995); 260 pages, \$23.00.

"When you look at the painting you do not see the sound."

Marten Clibbens, **Sonet**, Leave Books (Buffalo, 1995); 32 pages.

An experimental sequence of poems, each using italicized lines from other writers (as diverse as Herrick and Hejninian), featuring a sort of corpulent lyricism, archaic vocabulary and Swinburnian cadence. Highly recommended.

Billy Collins, **The Art of Drowning**, University of Pittsburgh Press (Pittsburgh, 1995); 95 pages, \$10.95.

"I want to write with the least control, one finger on the steering wheel, to write like a watercolorist/whose brush persuades the liquids to stay above the pull and run of gravity."

Cid Corman, **how now**, Cityful Press (Boulder, 1995); 120 pages.

Corman's version of the Tao te Ching. As if the Tao were not condensed enough, Mr. Corman condenses it still more. If that's how you like your Chinese mysticism, this is the book for you. Gorgeous production with afterword by Andrew Schelling.

John Crouse, **Lapses**, O Books (San Francisco, 1995); 69 pages, \$8.00.

Prose poems, numbered Lapse Three, Lapse Four, etc. Follows the adventures of Z, Wizard and Gipsy through "the camel of wow." Next.

Peter Davison, **The Poems of Peter Davison**, Alfred A Knopf (New York, 1995); 312 pages, \$25.00.

A very weighty tome indeed.

Milo de Angelis, **Finite Intuition: Selected Poetry and Prose**, transl. Lawrence Venuti, Sun & Moon Classics (Los Angeles, 1995); 158 pages, \$11.95.

Significant collection of poetry and criticism by the esteemed Italian poet: "that meeting/between raptus and firmament/wherefrom we return erased."

Ray Di Palma, **Provocations**, Potes and Poets Press (Elmwood, 1994); 101 pages, \$11.00.

These poems are intelligent, odd, experimental, moving and funny. Highly recommended.

Joseph Donahue, **World Well Broken**, Talisman House (Jersey City, 1995); 56 pages, \$9.95.

"Each dreams of the other. Same Night. Same instant of night. In the maze of the other each cries out. The lost cries echo." and so on...

David Dooley, **The Revenge By Love**, Story Line Press (Brownsville, 1995); 55 pages, \$11.95.

A cycle of poems concerning the torrid

relationship between Georgia O'Keefe and Alfred Stieglitz. Helen Vendler and Donald Hall dig this one. I couldn't quite.

Elke Erb, **Mountains In Berlin**, Burning Deck (Providence, 1995); 94 pages, \$8.00.

This East-German poets' fascinating glimpses of every day life in Eastern Europe are expertly translated by Rosemarie Waldrop. Highly recommended.

Edward Foster, **All Acts Are Simply Acts**, Rodent Press (Boulder, 1995); 111 pages, \$7.00.

A collection of poems and prose works from the editor of Talisman & Talisman House Books. The works are quite various in style and content. The book opens with a strong essay called, Poetry Has Nothing To Do With Politics. That ought to rile up some folks. Recommended.

Sandra M. Gilbert, **Ghost Volcano**, Norton (New York, 1995); 111 pages, \$17.95.

The book chronicles the story of her husband's death. Very serious stuff.

C.S. Giscombe, **Two Sections From Giscome Road**, Leave Books (Buffalo, 1995); 28 pages.

A poem including history and geography, but not exactly in the footsteps of Olson's Maximus. Recommended.

Rachelle Hall, **The Last Night**, Alpha Beat Press (New Hope, 1994); 22 pages, \$5.00.

"I see your body. I see your Face. I see you shouting behind the gates of Never Ever Again."

New From **HARD PRESS Inc.**, publishers of *Lingo*: A Journal of the Arts



### SOLOW

By Lynn Crawford

*Haven't wanted to read anything lately, certainly not any of the 500 manuscripts and galleys I get a year. However, I found Solow facinating. It reminds me of early John Hawkes which is still for me the best Hawkes. The whole dreamscape was especially vivid.*—Jim Harrison

Harrison

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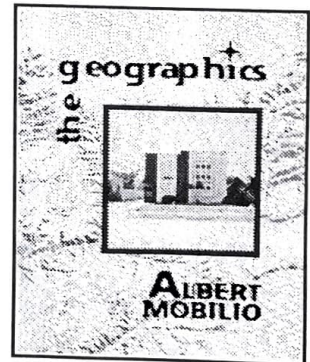
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—Robert Creeley

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Brooks Haxton, **The Sun At Night**, Alfred A. Knopf (New York, 1995); 76 pages, \$20.00.

Pretty solid, if conservative Southern writing. Audacious and melodramatic. "The shrink with caliper in both hands/hunched his shoulders up/to place the two electrodes at right/template and right parietal arch."

John Hollander, **Selected Poetry**, Alfred A. Knopf (New York, 1995); 339 pages, \$15.00.

As academic poets go, Hollander is one of the better rides. He experiments with different forms and is a bit less stuffy than his peers. For his fans, this would be an essential book.

John Hollander, **Tesseract and Other Poems**, Alfred A. Knopf (New York, 1995); 89 pages, \$12.00.

"Or—[A] A muttering pain, so quietly/Inflected and oracular... Well, [B]/My Death — is that an answer or a question?/[C] Is B a real question? [D] Is C?"

Lisa Houston, **Liquid Amber**, Leave Books (Buffalo, 1994); 16 pages.

A suite of poems generated from travel writing by Bernal Diaz Del Castillo. Here the notion of serial poetry (ala Spicer) is suggested. Recommended.

Lynda Hull, **The Only World**, HarperCollins (New York, 1995); 80 pages, \$12.00.

"Deep freeze humming the rails, the entrance/into the unknown city, the bus station pulsing/florescent waves across ranks of pay tv's,/a quarter a view for those laying over, for those/mired in dim rooms, too long alone with themselves./You know how it is."

Mary Karr, **The Liars' Club**, Viking (New York, 1995); 320 pages, \$22.95.

Amazing memoir of Karr's childhood in a Texas refinery town. To quote Kirkus Reviews: "A wickedly funny account of smart-alecky goofing off can suddenly bolt into a horrific remembrance of sexual abuse..." Recommended.

Deborah Keenan, **Happiness**, Coffee House (Minneapolis, 1995); 101 pages, \$11.95.

"Tiny women connected to dogs/always made sense to me." ????

Richard Kenney, **The Invention of the Zero**, Alfred A. Knopf (New York, 1995); 158 pages, \$12.00.

Four long poems concerning WWII, philosophy and a bit of mysticism. "Cog nor pawl,/truly, Father, I/know nothing, recognizing/nothing of the land-/scapes spooling past."

Ralph Keyes, **The Courage To Write**, Henry Holt & Co. (New York, 1995); 229 pages, \$17.95.

Probably a useful self help book, subtitled How Writers Transcend Fear. One wonderful sub-chapter is titled, Page Fright. Seems like a good start.

Cynthia Kimball, **Omen for a birthday**, Leave Books (Buffalo, 1994); folding broadside.

A spectacular example of what can be

done with the broadside format. When unfolded, there is a poem spread out on a broad surface (good poem, too), and when folded, we see a star map of the northern hemisphere. Highly recommended.

James Laughlin, **The Country Road**, Zoland Books (Cambridge, 1995); 149 pages, \$22.95.

Excellent lyrical poetry, tantalizing without being indulgent. Laughlin continues to write work that is both disciplined and free at the same time. Highly recommended.

M.L. Liebler, **Stripping the Adult Century Bare**, Viet Nam Generation Inc. (Woodbridge, 1995); 84 pages, \$12.00.

Straight-shooting political and anthemic performance poetry, keeping the issues alive with a dose of rock and roll.

Ira Lightman, **psychoanalysis of oedipus**, Leave Books (Buffalo, 1994); 12 pages.

"not all want to kill their father/half as much as i do,/roseanne arnold effaces freud/with a single more sensible motive: vengeance."

Joan McBreen, **A Walled Garden In Moylough**, Story Line Press (Brownsville, 1995); 52 pages, \$10.95.

Lovely lyric poetry from this Irish poet, this being her second book.

Larry McCaffery, ed., **After Yesterday's Crash; The Avant-Pop Anthology**, Penguin (New York, 1995); 348 pages, \$12.95.

Fast, disjunctive, violent and/or sexy writing which uses "avant-garde" tech-

niques such as cut-ups, photo-collage, and typographical innovations (with a possible reference to computers, etc.). Without getting into arguments over the newness of such writing, I would still have to recommend this fiction anthology, containing, as it does, great stories by such writers as Lynne Tillman, Steve Katz, William T. Vollman, Craig Baldwin, Derek Pell, William Gibson, Ben Marcus, David Blair and Paul Auster. Highly recommended.

Michael McClure, **3 Poems**, Penguin (New York, 1995); 233 pages, \$14.95.

This book reprints two of McClures' marvelous long poems, "Dark Brown" and "Rare Angel". For those who already have these works, there is an additional long poem, "Dolphin Skull," which delivers the goods in his inimitable way. If you don't know McClures' work, this book is absolutely necessary. Highly Recommended.

Wilma Elizabeth McDaniel, **The Last Dust Storm**, Hanging Loose Press (Brooklyn, 1995); 105 pages, \$12.00.

Poems generated by the Dustbowl Exodus of the 1930's and the Great Depression. Very well written vignettes of the people and times Recommended.

Mark McMorris, **Figures For A Hypothesis**, Leave Books (Buffalo, 1994); 26 pages.

"Each time I turn on the radio, I listen for a change in intonation, a stress on the Viennese lampshade or the ceramic things. The pavingstones will not budge, nor the

## Buck Downs Books



**Open 24 Hours**, Issue Eleven. Once again, our contributors continue to surpass our expectations, filling this issue with don't-miss writing like Mary Burger's "My Recent Disgust with the Act of Thinking". Contributors in #11 include Jeff Hull, Laynie Brown, Bill Howe, and many, many more. 55pp., staple-bound. Issue #11 \$4; three-issue subscription, \$10.

### Ameresque: the snap wyatt poems poems by Robert Fitterman images by Don Colley



Exploring in tandem the carnival which grinds out its tune at the edge of city living, Fitterman's text and Colley's art combine to skewer the American Individual making its last cameo appearance in the sideshow of American life. "Ameresque is words on the road. The human pen cushions a not-so-nice furrow, and the groove ain't narrow... Hold onto these poems, the elephants are coming!" (Melanie Neilson) 48pp., 11 illustrations, \$6.

**Special Offer for Poetry Project Newsletter Readers: Order Ameresque for \$7 (book + \$1 p/h) and receive O24H11 FREE!**

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weeds that harp on them and cling,  
stronger than cement."

Eve Merriam, **Embracing the Dark**, Garden Street Press (Cambridge, 1995); 80 pages.

"To shake memory like a field mouse/and tear it to bits."

Ben Milder, **The Good Book Says...Light Verse To Illuminate the Old Testament**, Time Being Books (St. Louis, 1995); 147 pages, \$14.50.

"He jumped up and began declaiming./And his message he was aiming/At the host of little parcels/Of assorted metatarsals." Amazing.

David Miller, **Stromata**, Burning Deck (Providence, 1995).

Philosophical poetry with a dreamlike ambience: "details reproduced through layers levels/the dream coming home in days' hours."

Mark Neider, **Hello Goodbye**, Witlin Book Co. (Dobbs Ferry, 1995); 83 pages, \$10.95.  
The Beatles did it better.

Gregory Orr, **City of Salt**, University of Pittsburgh Press (Pittsburgh, 1995); 64 pages, \$10.95.

This installment of the Pitt Poetry Series is much like one might expect: stately, solemn and technically very conservative.

Randall Potts, **Recant: (A Revision)**, Leave Books (Buffalo, 1994); 18 pages.

A mosaic of writings from a 17th Century religious movement called the Ranters, with a dash of Jesse Helms thrown in for good measure and a bit of a Socialist Sunday School Hymn Book from the turn of the century. Give it a spin.

Matthew Rohrer, **A Hummock In the Malookas**, WW Norton & Co. (New York, 1995); 74 pages, \$17.95.

1994 National Poetry Series award winner, selected by Mary Oliver. "The cast of characters includes my best friend, and a doctor/with Chinese breasts."

Charles Rossiter, **No, I Didn't Steal This Baby I'm the Daddy**, A.P.D. (Albany, 1995); 20 pages, \$3.00.

Poems by a happy dad.

Mark Rudman, **Realm of Unknowing: Meditations On Art, Suicide, and Other Transformations**, Wesleyan University Press (Hanover, 1995); 181 pages, \$14.95.

8 Powerful essays, well written and to the points outlined in the title. "Seeing has been the central metaphor of Western Culture ever since Oedipus plucked out his eyes."

Tim Sandlin, **Social Blunders**, Henry Holt & Co. (New York, 1995); 281 pages, \$22.50.

Novel. Tragicomedy. Larry McMurtry, Kim Gordon and Drew Barrymore liked it. You might, too.

Linda Gray Sexton, **Searching For Mercy Street: My Journey Back To My Mother**, Anne Sexton, Little, Brown & Co. (Boston, 1994); 307 pages, \$22.95.

Indispensable for those Anne Sexton fans out there.

Jason Shinder, ed., **Eternal Light: Grandparent Poems**, Harcourt Brace & Co. (New York, 1995); 120 pages, \$10.00.

This is an anthology of poems about grandparents, not necessarily by grandparents. Included are: James Wright, WS Merwin, Adrienne Rich, Sharon Olds, Jimmy Santiago Baca, Quincey Troupe, Alberto Rios, Li-Young Lee, and many others.

Elisabeth Stevens, **The Night Lover**, Birch Book Press (Delhi, 1995); 55 pages, \$11.50.

"Breast to breast, arms interlocked,/legs intertwined,/our eyes are lights to sail by,/our loins a single lamp."

Wisława Szymborska, **View With A Grain of Sand: Selected Poems**, transl. Stanislaw Baranczak & Clare Cavanagh, Harcourt Brace & Co. (New York, 1995); 214 pages, \$20.00.

This selected poems by celebrated Polish poet Wisława Szymborska brings together poems from her seven previous books, ranging from 1957 to 1993. The poems are smart, funny and subtle. Highly Recommended.

Keith Taylor, **Life Science and Other Stories**, Hanging Loose Press (Brooklyn, 1995); 72 pages, \$12.00.

Delightful collection of short prose. Startling and mysterious, Recommended.

Sharon Thesen, **aurora**, Coach House Press (Toronto, 1995); 75 pages, \$12.95.

Very interesting collection of poems that range from terra rima to open form narrative and meditative investigations. The book closes with a great sequence entitled, "gala roses." Recommended.

Tod Thilleman, **Wave-Run**, Spuyten Duyvil (New York, 1995); 55 pages, \$7.95.

"Cupped, cupped coiling wave contains/somewhere line's forms language."

John Updike, **Collected Poems, 1953-1993**, Alfred A. Knopf (New York, 1995); 387 pages, \$15.00.

I was pleasantly surprised by this volume of poems, they are surprisingly interesting and sometimes oddly written. Updike's poems are far superior to his novels, if you ask me. Not everyone's cup of tea, but pretty good.

Lequita Vance-Watkins & Aratani Mariko, eds., **White Flash, Black Rain: Women of Japan Relive the Bomb**, Milkweed Editions (Minneapolis, 1995); 105 pages, \$12.95.

Includes works by Tanaka Kiyoko, Shoda Shinoo, Nakao Fusako, Ishikawa Itsuko, Maruki Toshi, Seki Chieko, Yamaguchi Misao, Yamaoka Michiko and others. Compelling. "as if they were rafts/under the flaming sky/bodies flow." —Haiku by Ito Hiroe. Recommended.

Diane Wakoski, **The Emerald City of Las Vegas**, Black Sparrow Press (Santa Rosa, 1995); 202 pages, \$13.50.

"The men I loved who left me were never so/nice, so willing to keep taking my/love." etc.

Wendy Walker, **Stories Out Of Omarie**, Sun & Moon Classics (Los Angeles, 1995); 320 pages.

8 stories based on a series of medieval poems. Stories of knights and swans and nightingales, of love and betrayal and revenge. Highly recommended.

Mark Weiss, **FieldNotes**, Junction Press (San Diego, 1995); 95 pages, \$11.00.

"A fish looks up/decides to fly but can't/it's not that kind of fish."

Rollo Whitehead, **Poems and Fragments**, A.O.N. Press (New York, 1995); 38 pages.

Here, finally, are the writings of the famed patriarch of the Unbearables. Mysterious and without value, they are characterized by this masterful poem:

POP  
ip.

Recommended.

Greg Williamson, **The Silent Partner**, Story Line Press (Brownsville, 1995); 86 pages, \$11.95.

Replete with an amusing spoof of Pounds' River-Merchant's Wife: A Letter and a pair of shaped poems (ala Hollander in the 60's), this young poet has immense talent and is very clever—too bad he was schooled by the likes of Hecht and Wilbur. I'd like to see what he would write after a few years on the downtown scene.

Cynthia Zarin, **Fire Lyric**, Alfred A. Knopf (New York, 1995); 71 pages, \$12.00.

"The cormorants are braying and neighing, clogging/the harbor. The scarp, and the little beach/where the boat is..."

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## MAGAZINES RECEIVED

**AGNI**, No. 41 (Boston University), 1995. Biannual, 250 pages, \$8.95.

Poetry, fiction, essays & reviews. Includes Yves Bonnefoy, Donald Hall, Ron Padgett, Adrienne Rich, Gordon Lish & many others. Interview with Michael Franco.

**THE AMERICAN POETRY REVIEW**, VOL. 24, NO. 4 (Philadelphia), July/August 1995. Bimonthly, 48 pages, \$3.25.

Poetry, reviews & essays. Poetry by Juan Felipe Herrera, Carl Rakosi, Maria Elena Cruz Varela, Anne Waldman & others. Features a mammoth-sized essay on Olson by Albert Cook.

**ATRES INTERNATIONAL, 1995: AN INTERNATIONAL READER OF LITERATURE, ART & MUSIC** (Stockholm/New York, 1995). Annual, 150 pages, \$15.00.

Includes: Kenzabur o Oe, Susan Sontag, Stanislaw Baranczak, Robert Bly, Roberto Calasso, Leif Zorn, Goran Tunstrom, Anna Ivarsdotter-Johnson, Per Wastberg, J.M. Coetzee, Marjorie Perloff, Sten Ake Nilsson, Soren Engblom, and a CD is included — A Musical Portrait of J.H. Roman.

**AUSTIN WRITER**, VOL. 15, NO. 6 (Austin), June 1995.

Newsletter of the Austin Writer's League. Keeping up with what's happening in Austin, Texas!

**COMPOUND EYE**, NO. 4 (Somerville), May/June 1995. Bimonthly, 12 pages, \$1.25.

Poetry by Willa Jarnagin, William Corbett, John Keegan, Mark DuCharme & Eric Malone.

**HANGING LOOSE**, NO. 66 (Brooklyn), 1995. Triannual, 104 pages, \$7.00.

Poetry & the Arts. Includes work by Sherman Alexie, Jack Anderson, Jim Gustafson, Hettie Jones, Mina Kumar, Elinor Nauen, Pat Nolan, Arthur Sze, Larry Zirlin & others. Recommended.

**IGNITE**, NO. 1 (New York), May/June 1995. Bimonthly, 64 pages, \$3.95.

Poetry & prose. Includes Barry Wallenstein, Hakim Bey, Edward Field, Bonny Finberg, Nina Zivancevic, Gerard Malanga & others. Interview with Carolyn Forché.

**THE IMPERCIPIENT**, NO. 7 (Providence), 1995. Triannual, 67 pages, \$5.00/

Poetry by Dan Bouchard, Joe Ross, Douglas Rothschild, Damon Krukowski, Rod Smith, Avery Burns, William Keckler, Steve Carll, Bill Luoma, Connie Deanovich & Kevin Davies. Highly Recommended.

**MAINE IN PRINT**, VOL. 10, NO. 5 (Brunswick), June 1995. Monthly, 26 pages.

Published by the Maine Writers & Publishers Alliance. This is their 20th Anniversary Issue.

Keeping abreast of writing business in Maine.

**THE NETWORK NEWS**, VOL. 11, NO. 4 (Carrboro), July/August 1995. Biannual.

Newsletter of the North Carolina Writer's Network. Hello, N.C.!

**PHAROS**, NO. 1 (Paris), January 1995. Biannual, 60 pages, \$12.50.

Poetry & prose from an ongoing workshop run by Alice Notley & Douglas Oliver at the British Institute in Paris. Features workshop members plus some surprises; Robert Creeley, Fielding Dawson, Anne Waldman, Douglas Oliver & Alice Notley. Recommended.

**PRIMAVERA: Women's Fiction, Poetry & Art**, Vol. 18/19 (Chicago), Summer 1995. Biannual. 128 pages, \$10.00.

Includes Pamela Gemin, Linda Tross, Dorothy S. Clark, Caroline J. Davis, Anita N. Feng, S.J. Hall & others.

**RADDLE MOON**, Vol. 7, No. 2 (#14) (Vancouver), 1995. Biannual, 112 pages, \$7.00.

Beautifully produced magazine, with large selections of work by a short list of authors: Melissa Wolsak, Bob Perelman, Kevin Davies, Anne Tardos, Yasmin Ladha and Deanna Ferguson. Highly recommended.

**RANT**, NO. 5 (New York), 1995. Biannual, 76 pages, \$3.95.

Poetry, Prose & rants by Tuli Kupferberg, Seth Putnam, Carl Watson, Hakim Bey, Lorraine Schein & others. Visionary Nihilism, I think they call it. Lots of fun. Recommended.

**RIVER STYX**, NO. 41 (St. Louis), 1995. Triannual, \$7.00.

Poetry & prose. Features Elaine Terranova, David Moolten, G.S. Giscombe, Alfred Arteaga, Sheila K. Smith, Antler, Lee Upton, Phillip Booth, Thea Temple & others.

**SANTA MONICA REVIEW**, VOL. 7, NO. 2 (Santa Monica), Spring 1995. Biannual, 76 pages, \$7.95.

Poetry & fiction. Includes Lisa Fugard, Adrienne Su, Curtis White, Stephen D. Gutierrez & others.

**SITUATION**, NO. 9 (Kensington), 1995. 24 pages, \$2.00.

Poetry by Rod Smith, Emily Miller, John Perlman, Mary Winters, Dennis Barone & others.

**SMELT MONEY**, NO. 4 (Lawrence), 1995. 6 pages.

Poetry by Craig Hill, Monica Peek, Kenneth Warren, Stephan Dignazio & Pat Nolan. Broadside Format. Recommended.

**SYNAESTHETIC**, NO. 2 (Jamaica, NY), 1994. 100 pages, \$10.00.

Poetry, photography, collage, found poetry, art, etc. This magazine is all over the place in a very entertaining way. Features Guy Beining, Alex Cigale, Tim Davis, Joe Eliot, Roberta Gould, Basil King, Richard Kostelanetz, Dean Kostos, Roseann Lloyd, Spencer Selby, Carolyn Stoloff.

Beautifully produced with some color pages. Highly recommended!

**WASHINGTON REVIEW**, VOL. 21, NO. 1 (Washington D.C.), June/July 1995. Bimonthly, 28 pages, \$2.50.

Poetry, fiction, art & reviews. This is a snappy issue featuring an interview with Richard Peabody & Lucinda Ebersole. Poetry by Bill Howe, Heather Fuller & Jean Nordhaus, fiction by Danny Duncan Collum & Liliane Giraudon. Many reviews, especially a review of Laurie Anderson's *Nerve Bible*. Recommended.

**WEST BRANCH**, NO. 36 (Lewisburg), 1995. Biannual, 126 pages, \$4.00.

Magazine published at Bucknell University, poetry & fiction. Includes Barbara Peck, Sandra Kohler, Michael Evans, Jesse Bier & many more.

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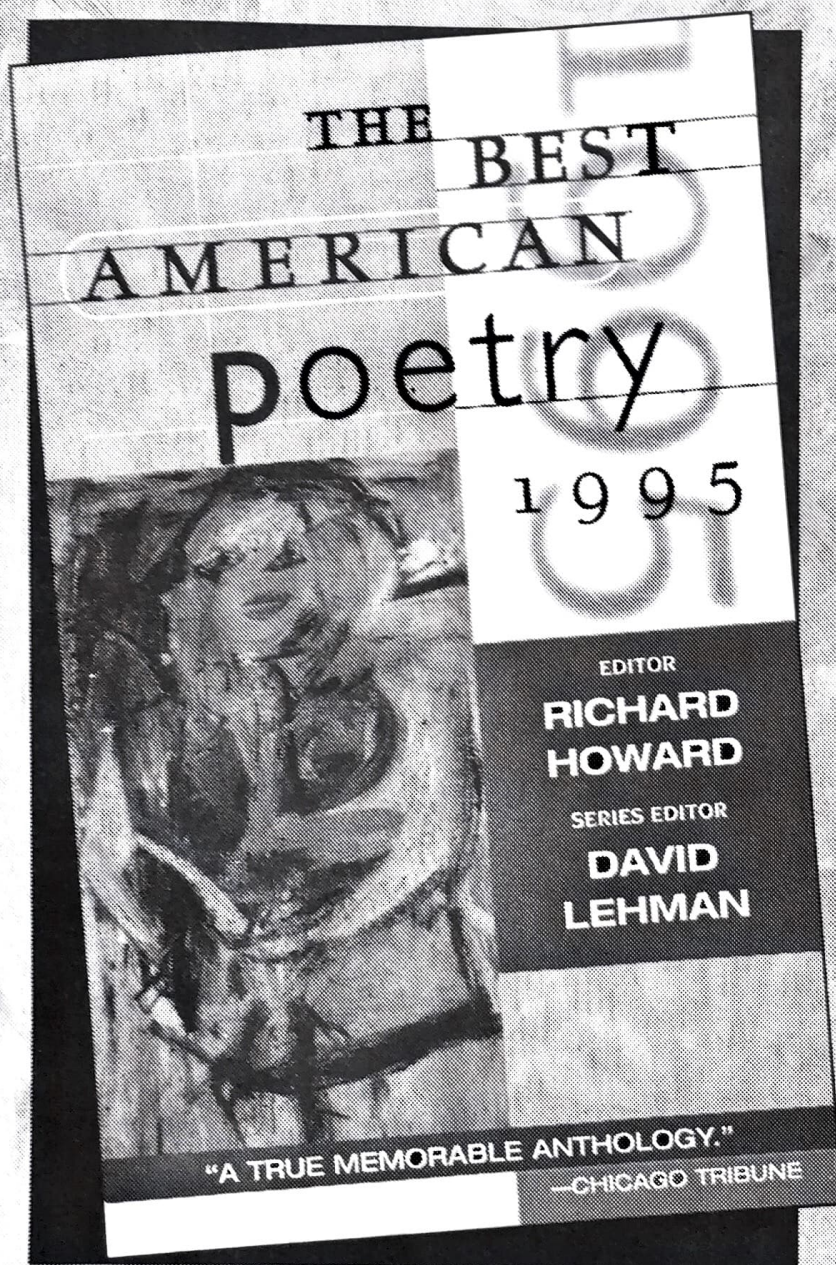
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