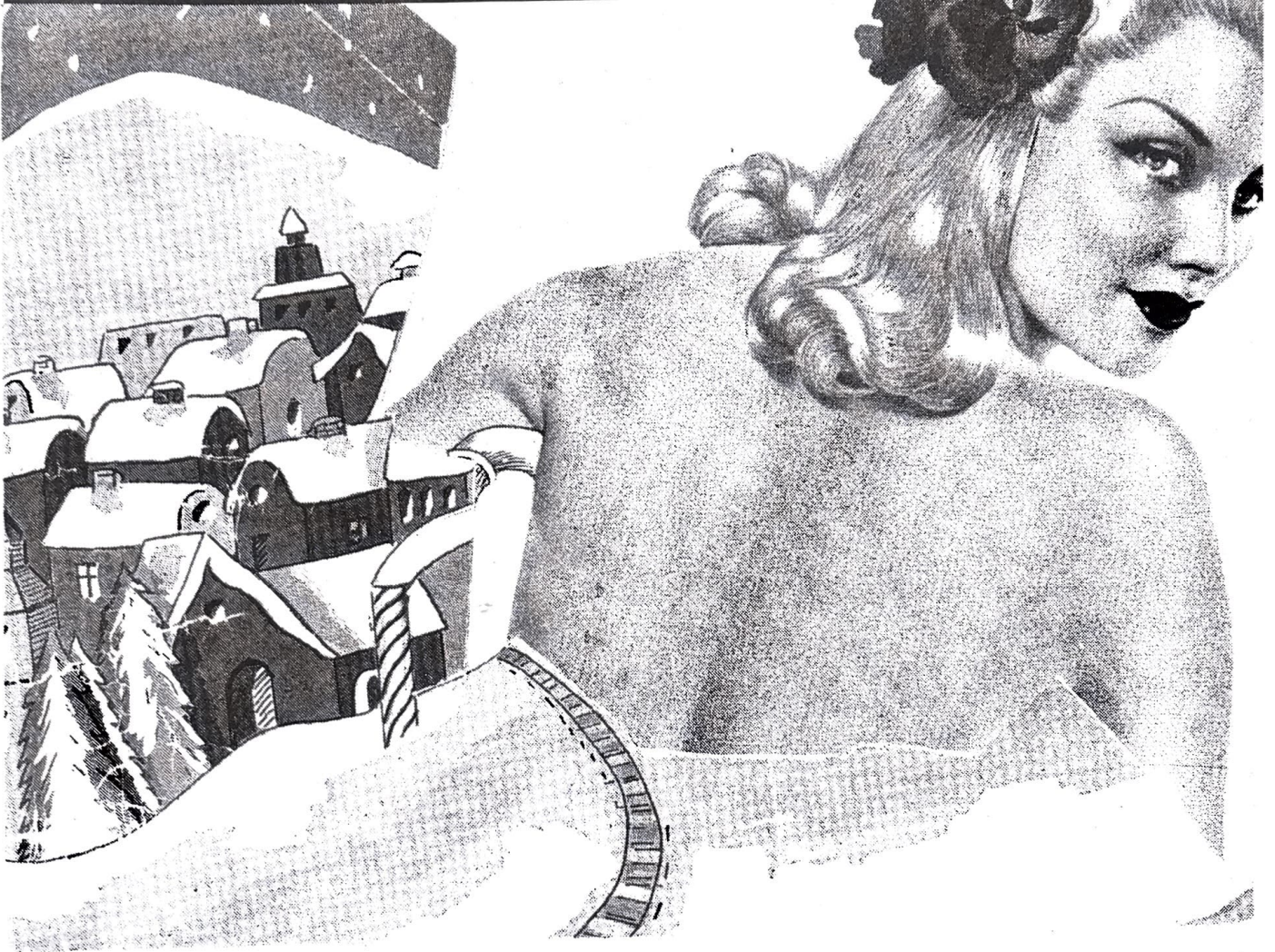


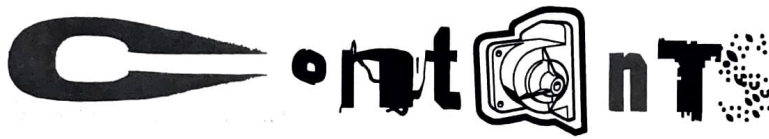
# Poetry Project

NEWSLETTER



*Sherman*

April / May 2002 Issue number 189



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**Books Received**

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A mere sampling.

# News and Announcements

On Monday, February 18, 2002, the very first 24-Hour Play Festival hosted by The Poetry Project was produced in its entirety in St. Mark's Church and was a marvelous success. Co-Producers Joanna Fuhrman and Veronica Corpuz would like to give a special thanks to the following people: **Tina Fallon** of The 24 Hour Plays and The 24 Hour Company, **Jordana Davis, Maureen Owen, Brian Kim Stefans, Jordan Davis, Ed Friedman, Crystal Field** of Theater for the New City, **Lee Briccetti** of Poets House, **David Vogen, 3rd Avenue Bagels**, and **Erica Kaufman**.

\* \* \*

## Introducing Double Change

Double Change was founded in 2000 in order to juxtapose, unite and reunite the poetries of France and the United States in a

new binational, multifaceted forum. Established as a not-for-profit organization in Paris, and with editorial boards in both France and the U.S., Double Change looks to represent an eclectic spectrum of poetic activity in both countries.

Double Change hopes to open new lines of communication between poets who may or may not already be well known outside of their own countries. The organization has two principal aims: to discover new poets and rediscover poets in expanded binational contexts; and to represent in our forums poets and other artists who are in dialogue with poetic texts.

We have two essential venues: a reading series in Paris, and a website featuring a poetry magazine. American and French poets read together at the jazz club the Duc des Lombards, in the center of Paris, close to the Pompidou Center. Readings are free and open to the public. The website ([www.dou-](http://www.dou-)

[blechange.com](http://www.dou-blechange.com)) was conceived as a comprehensive venue for French and American poetries and poetic cultures and communities. The online magazine features poems by both French and American poets (in both translation and the original language), as well as articles, interviews, reviews and conversations. The site will also list reading dates and times well in advance.

We hope the site will offer readers a glimpse of places and ways in which poetry is active, complex and ever-more-diverse in both countries. —Olivier Brossard, Editor

\* \* \*

A corrected version of **Kristin Prevallet's** interview with **Kenward Elmslie**, first published in *The Poetry Project Newsletter*, is posted on *Jacket 16*: <http://www.jacket.zip.com.au/jacket16>.

## Letter

Dear Editor,

All of us at Small Press Traffic are most grateful for Fred Moten's review of *Tripwire 5*, edited by David Buuck and Yedda Morrison, and featuring the proceedings from the conference "Expanding the Repertoire: Continuity and Change in African-American Writing," held in San Francisco in April of 2000. I want to clarify, however, that this conference was not held by New College, but rather by Small Press Traffic. We are a 28 year old autonomous literary organization, graciously housed at New College in the 90s, and just as graciously housed at the California College of Arts and Crafts since 2000.

I should also mention that giovanni singleton, Renee Gladman, and my predeces-

sors here at SPT, Dodie Bellamy and Jocelyn Saidenberg, were integral to that conference's fruition.

We hope to see many of you at our upcoming conference, "Coordinates 2002: Indigenous Writing Now," which is scheduled for April 2002.

Warmly,

Elizabeth Treadwell Jackson  
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### Miriam Solan

Miriam Solan died on New Year's Eve of various forms of cancer. She was a great friend and poet, an inveterate workshop goer, a great laughter and an ingenious thinker. Her published books include *Seductions* by Barlemmir House and dedicated to her husband Henry and her daughters Alicia and Samara; and *A Woman Combing* published by Hard Press and dedicated to the memories of Lottie Krinitz Kalichman and Samuel Spitzberg. She also published in many magazines including *The World*, was a keen observer, a generous person, a person you would want to be with all the time. Hooray for Miriam!—Bernadette Mayer

**piet mondrian**

**by Fred Moten**

*and descend. low ceiling and Fred Hopkins on Division stories form and sing like angola la*

*jus tippin in jus tippin in/or you could play the record*

*like graphophone brush*

*stroke new plastic, platon*

*sing and rub each other, go off and talk with the people, decide that late  
construction*

1. they are the music on space. 2. where and in what direction would I go if not,  
have I got to a story yet, have I seen the one who could get me to the whole

3. elegy the victor

*and then clasp hands and then clasp hands*

*movement with movement, stacked, brushed*

willingness to past goes fail  
but naw, shooter, shooter,  
reach back when you pass  
caress in what you fail

*appears now, look and this motherfucker start movin. movin I tried to see if I could feel my toe pointed real sharp slid back to me on the floor though my boot or if I could rub up against with my arms and listening I was in this song brushing up against 5 and 6 green and N, R, Q my fingers wet F, G my cheek glistened*

I was in this song up against learning blue hang from strap or steel. the sweat  
from my hand. this woman's face had four smiles one right now  
hurt and next to it sighed morning yes I was in this song and below this song *having set up situations for some automatic moving, fuck them situations: chairs and the shards of chairs placed on the floor, what would have been chairs have words burned on them all of them is Mondriaan making me a world*

*original cut and paste, suit and tie, song and paste, cut and song,  
tie and suite let the cardinal and the pieces of tape and let the city entered through window and floor dance like a character*

*flows piet to*  
quadrants stepped and to Ammons, regular left and right coloring otherwise black and white that movement, dance hand, articulate in suit and tie, round and austere dutch jug: these were the encounter and how I began. Now I'm moving squarely to the back stage, you can see how the city entered *dancers enter, cardinally, unset*: you can see why you don't just step to the canvas any kinda way

*you can't just enter any kinda way as if the paint just enters, like if a city, and the city moves. like in the bare space of a bar, turn the music on*

# Poetry in a Time of Crisis

by Juliana Spahr

Shortly after I finished my dissertation, I got to thinking, as I'm sure many have, about how many years it had taken me to write. Then I started thinking about all the things that had happened in those years. Some of these things were personal, the death of my father for instance. But I also realized I could chart my progress through my dissertation through various acts of military aggression by the U.S. I began my dissertation during the Gulf War because I remembered watching the coverage to avoid beginning writing. I finished rewriting it into a book while we were bombing Belgrade. When I realized this, I felt a momentary hope that I had been writing during unique times. But as I thought it over, I realized I had done no writing at any point when the U.S. was not bombing someone. I wrote this paper, for instance, during the bombing of Afghanistan and the continued bombing of Iraq. Even my home of sorts was being bombed as I wrote this as the U.S. military practices bombing in the Makua valley on the North Shore of Oahu. I could go on. I'm living in New York City this year. Some where around 3,000 people died in the World Trade Center while I watched from a street corner in Brooklyn. But that is nothing. Some 72,000 have died from AIDS in New York City since 1981. There is, thus, constantly crisis. We cannot say that unique, or interesting, times arrived on September 11.

As there is always crisis, there is always poetry. The association between poetry and crisis is so strong

that even at his son's wedding Osama bin Laden recited a poem about the bombing of the Cole. In that recently released tape of bin Laden speaking with the Shaykh he once again turns to poetry. It isn't just bin Laden. Poetry of all genres has a special relationship to crisis, and crisis's politics. The genre of poetry is especially useful in times of crisis because of the broadness of its definition, its possible shortness and its possible longness, its rhyme and rhythm or not. It both has rules and does not. Thus its attraction. But also, because it can be all these different forms it can make room for very different emotions. So poetry can both comfort and confront. It can unite and separate. I always cringe a little when people make those optimistic statements about poetry being all about love or poetry being all about countering the oblivion of darkness or poetry being the genre to comfort. Poetry has a place in a lot of different rooms and a special place in the room of crisis. Poetry has an obvious importance to places dealing with the crisis of continuing colonialism. Hawaii, for instance, has had two very public discussions about poetry over the last ten years, so public they ended up being front page stories in the newspapers. One over a Huanani Kay Trask poem called "White Racist Woman" and a cartoon in the student newspaper that mocked the poem and the poet. The other over issues of race in Lois Ann Yamanaka's poem "Kala Gave Me Anykine Advice Especially About Filipinos When I Moved to Pahala."

I wonder sometimes if it isn't perhaps a most peculiar time for poets on the continental U.S. and in parts of Europe where poetry's relation to crisis or politics is something that can be questioned or ignored or even denied. Is there any other time that such a denial has been attempted by so many? Billy Collins has gotten enough complaint for his *USA Today* (September 24, 2001) statement that "A poem about mushrooms or about a walk with the dog is a more eloquent response to Sept. 11 than a poem that announces that wholesale murder is a bad thing." And I hate to join in, but eloquent? I also can't help but point out that there are other parts to his brief statement that seem just plain wrong. Such as when he says, as if the long tradition of poetry of anger and resistance did not exist, "All poetry stands in opposition to [this calamity]. Pick a poem, any poem, from an anthology and you will see that it is speaking for life and therefore against the taking of it." But it is his statement that "poetry by its nature moves us inward, not outward to the public and the collective" that seems to me to be the most disturbing.

In response, in an attempt to present one sort of work that I think poetry can do in this constant time of crisis, I want to talk some about poetry that is attentive to collective possibility. I want to tell a story about a reading by Alan Davies that I attended at the beginning of October. Davies is a contemporary poet that has been writing and publishing since the 1970s. He is also a Buddhist.

The reading was in three parts: Davies read a poem called "Pain," then a Buddhist tract by Dogen, a zen master from the 12th century, then he read "Pain" again. During the reading, Drew Gardner, also a poet, accompanied him on percussion. In the first reading of "Pain" there were chunks of language and percussion and silence that were of various lengths and this made it appear as if the poem was read slowly. The second time these chunks were gone and the performance appeared faster and angrier. "Pain" goes like this (I'm just quoting from the beginning):

These words  
Are the only words

This time  
Is the only time

This love  
Is the only love

These victims  
Are the only victims

These friends  
Are the only friends

This day  
Is the only day

This town  
Is the only town

The poem keeps this form more or less throughout the poem. There are small variations. Such as the last stanza, "But no one is absent / No one is absent any more," which repeats a stanza that appeared previously.

In some sense, this poem might fit Collins's notion that poetry moves us inward. The poem is in part trance inducing chant. It speaks from the position of the individual and it is about the inward motion of thought. One reading of this poem is as an exploration of what happens in the mind when shocking things happen: one's whole world becomes crucial and only and one has to accept that. When I stood on the Brooklyn street corner and watched the first tower collapse, I stood with a crowd. When that building collapsed we all screamed or gasped and then we all just scattered back into our houses. I heard those around me say things like "this is too fucking weird" and "I'm getting out here." This "only" is the state we were in. The word "only" in Davies's poem is large: this is the only thing that matters right now. And yet also small: this mundane object—the poem goes on to put words like "pizza," "soda," "desk," and "pets" into the form—is only in that it is something that does not matter to the larger world.

When I first heard this poem, I kept wishing that the noun in the form had been more plural. For instance, there is a line in this poem that goes "This country/Is the only country" and this line bothered me because it seems to echo so much the untruth of American exceptionalism. I worried that it ignored our continued bombings. It ignored how often we have induced this state of "only" in others.

But when I was discussing this poem with the poet Gary Sullivan, he wrote this to me in response: "I have an idea about 'the only' vs. 'the multitude,' which has to do with [Davies] switching back & forth between 'Pain' (profound pain tending to isolate, alienate) and the Buddhist text. To me, a crucial point here was that he was framing the buddhist text w/pain, enacting the struggle one has between pain and some larger reaching

vision. So that statements like 'this disaster is the only disaster' were both meant, to the extent that he can inhabit that level of pain, and critiqued by virtue of being in relation to the Buddhist text. I thought it was particularly interesting he used a religious text in the piece, considering the attack on 9/11 seemed to have stemmed in part from religious belief. I think, knowing Alan a little bit, that all of it was both meant and meant to be in question."

It is this last stanza of "But no one is absent/No one is absent any more" that resonates so attentively to

**In this time of crisis, like in times of crisis before, I need models of intimacy that are full of acquaintance and publics; that are public declarations of collective culture and connective agency.**

the outward, the collective that Collins denies to poetry. The language of this piece points to both sorts of selfishness that define recent events: the selfish privilege and imperialism of the United States and the selfish violence of terrorism. This last stanza thus, is a powerful statement of presence. It suggests, among many other things, that no relationships are hermetically sealed or separated off from others or those concerns that lurk at the borders in national and personal relationships. That pain forms political, public communities in which no one is absent. It challenges both the way we are and the way we are with others. Even inward retreat is a moment of relation with larger consequences.

When *USA Today* turned to the poet laureates and asked them "to select a piece of their work that they believe has a message for these difficult times," the poet laureates did not choose poems about collective, connective necessities and difficulties. They choose inward turns, mainly poems about their own encounters with deaths. There is nothing wrong with this or these poems. They are just of no help to me in this large instant. They ask me to experience an inward mourning, not a connective mourning. The inward turn feels of so little help in this time of crisis, like in

times of crisis before. All I can figure out with any certainty about recent events is that the reason two airplanes slammed into two buildings and these two buildings collapsed had something to do with groups of people on both sides having trouble thinking about people on the side they were not on. So in this time of crisis, like in times of crisis before, it is philosophies of connection that help me to begin to think things through. In this time of crisis, like in times of crisis before, I need models of intimacy that are full of acquaintance and publics; that are public declarations

of collective culture and connective agency. Davies' poem, heard weeks after September 11, suggested ways to think about connective possibility, ways to no one absent any more. It is not that this is enough. It is never enough. I just found this poem one helpful possibility in stimulating my thinking. I am saying merely that I am hoping we can have more poetries of connection in the future. More

poems dealing with these difficult moments of how we talk to each other that acknowledge how difficult it is. More outward turns.

#### Works Cited:

- Davies, Alan. Pain. New York: Other Publications, 2001.  
"Poetry and Tragedy." *USA Today*. September 24, 2001.  
(<http://www.usatoday.com/news/comment/2001-09-25-ncquest1.htm>)

*This paper indebted to discussion with Alan Davies, Ben Friedlander, Drew Gardner, Nada Gordon, Carol Mirakove, Gary Sullivan, and Mark Wallace.*

...

*Juliana Spahr's most recent books are Fuck You-Aloha I Love You and Everybody's Autonomy. She ususally teaches at the University of Hawai'i, Manoa but is spending this year in Brooklyn.*



# Italian Music in Dakota: Notes on the Poetry of Merrill Gilfillan

by David Perry

"Nature poetry is immoral," Juliana Spahr stated at her recent Poetry Project reading, citing the tendency of "nature poets" to ignore the backhoe in the dunes while taking in a sunset from the beach. It's a charge that places great pressure on the word "nature." What IS nature, anyway? A concept to be placed in scare quotes? Dwindling islands of undeveloped land? Wildlife preserves? Is nature lost? Is it on TV yet? Can we buy some before it's gone?

At the time, something about Spahr's comment reminded me of Adorno's oft-cited judgment that post-Auschwitz poetry is an impossibility—Western civilization cast as an ongoing criminal disaster. But that's too easy. Such statements risk reducing history to *our* time and poetry to a question of "possibility." Was poetry impossible after the Thirty Years War, the Spanish Conquest, the eleventh of September? And to get back to nature—where does it end? What *isn't* natural? Isn't it everything, from anthill to skyscraper? Isn't it disaster, too? Language? Objects and energies, being in space and time?

Perhaps such beating around the semantic bush is "immoral"—these questions won't save endangered species, and their publication costs trees and fossil fuels. And a postmodern notion of nature that perversely naturalizes environmental degradation by way of cheap deconstruction of "nature" is surely worse than the traditional romanticization of it. Seeking answers to the questions that arise when we reconsider

our relation to the world we typically call "natural" does offer hope, and poetry that works to enlarge our concept of nature rather than re-enforcing a false and dangerous sense of separation from it is one way to seek those answers.

We've had many writers of such nature poetry, writers who take care to consider *what's there* rather than what one chooses to see. In the American grain, there's William Bartram, for instance, who first used the word "sublime" in the 18th century to describe the overwhelming simultaneous exaltation and humbling diminishment of feeling one with nature. He explored and wrote of the southeastern woods and swamps of early America, describing the native peoples in glowing terms at a time when, in the colonial imagination they were a wild to be tamed, the haunt of heathens in need of saving. Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, of course, celebrated the naturalness of all things. In the 20th century, William Carlos Williams, for one, strove to come to terms with the human alteration of the world, as in his poem "The Hard Core of Beauty":

The most marvellous is not  
the beauty, deep as that is,  
but the classic attempt  
at beauty,  
at the swamp's center: the  
dead-end highway, abandoned  
when the new bridge went in finally.

And the beginning of the 21st century, there's

Spahr, too, who notes in a recent issue of *Fence* that the chemical plants of Wheeling, West Virginia, appeared to her as a child as "Fairyland" and for whom the words of Gertrude Stein helped her understand her experience of growing up in "the rural industrial belt of the midwest" because Stein "did not write over that terrain as Robert Frost...seemed to do. Her work spoke...about other things: confusion, fracture, flux, searching, exploration, changing states of being."

This brings me to the poetry of Merrill Gilfillan, which has resonated with my own experience growing up in midwestern cities and small towns before I moved to New York. For those not familiar with Gilfillan's work, and perhaps for those who might only know his fiction and essays, it might be nature poetry of the best possible sort—it opens and keeps on opening, folding the intense, specific experience of the at-large individual into the vastness of what can be perceived when one really looks, listens, feels, thinks. And it does so with a rare sense of play, humor and history. He frequently starts with the arrangement of features of a particular landscape, and in the course of composition, we find the outside has moved in, suddenly yet subtly, striking startling constellations of artifacts, notions and people. Take, for instance, the following from "Mouth of the Whosis," the closing cycle in Gilfillan's most recent book of poetry, *Satin Street*. "Whosis" is an interstate prose-poem series whose ten parts correspond to ten high-plains rivers—here, North Dakota's Cannonball:

At Bismarck (far from the Cannonball) there was a quarter moon of thumbnail on the cafe table below a dirty plastic rose. It looked friendly and old. Dressed differently, bedded on velvet in a 2 inch cypress box with sliding stained glass top, it might have brought thousands at Sotheby's relic auction.

Several currents typical of Gilfillan's poetry run clear here. Attention to incidental detail gives rise to a rush of mused alternate history: The waters of the Cannonball segue into the European Dark Ages and curl back again, bearing with them a note on the trans-

formation of prime Western value from salvation to capital, relic to commodity. The word "Western" neatly splits—Western world, American West—revealing an object lesson in human nature and history as the reader is invited to imagine the ease with which believer or buyer might be hoodwinked by any found thumbnail. The tone is that of a story in the telling between friends. Poetic tension holds as the verse makes its associations, from the Cannonball to Bismarck to Sotheby's. There is an air of story, as the conversational rhythm takes its own time, casually springing surprises.

...a postmodern notion of nature that perversely naturalizes environmental degradation by way of cheap deconstruction of "nature" is surely worse than the traditional romanticization of it.

Both *Qua Books* and *Adventures in Poetry* are planning collections of Gilfillan's recent poems for 2002. This is welcome news; 1997's *Satin Street* is the only book of his poetry published since 1982's out-of-print *River Through Rivertown*. Still available, though hard to find, are the earlier short collections—*Light Years: Selected Early Work 1969-1972*, and *To Creature*. Then there are various out-of-print chapbooks and early collections of poems, including 1970's *Truck*, parts of which appear in the recent *Angel Hair Anthology* along with a miniature reproduction of the original Joe Brainard cover print.

As for the award-winning fiction and essays for which he has become most widely known—*Maggie Rising*, *Sworn Before Cranes*, *Burnt House to Paw Paw*, *Chokecherry Places*, *Grasshopper Falls*—the titles alone reveal a steady attraction to what he calls, in *Maggie Rising*, "the geographic word softly detonating and filling the head," drawing in with it the lives of the diverse inhabitants of all that named space. The prose flows from the same source as the poetry, and *Maggie Rising*—recently reissued by Hanging Loose—reads, as the longer poem cycles in *Rivertown* and *Satin Street*.

something like an American haibun. In the 17th century, Basho perfected the haibun's limpid poetic travelogue while wandering the hinterlands of Japan; in North America, Gilfillan has, for the past quarter-century-plus, been traveling the continent's towns, cities, plains, rivers and mountains, writing all the way, stopping to ask, as "Sora, Basho's friend" does in *Rivertown's* "One Morning,"

*What special delicacy  
is served here, I wonder*

Born in 1945 in Mt. Gilead, Ohio, Gilfillan attended the University of Michigan, where, like Frank O'Hara seventeen years prior, he won a Major Hopwood for his poetry in 1967. He studied at Iowa with Ted Berrigan, Anselm Hollo and George Starbuck, among others, earning an M.F.A. in 1969. He then spent eight years in New York. Along the way, he made a number of friends, judging from the poets to whom he dedicates poems (Ted Berrigan, John Godfrey, Philip Whalen, to name a few). The early work vibrates with a 60's sense of life as experiment, written, say, to the broke sounds of Captain Beefheart and Albert Ayler by a post-beat *picaro* in search of the perfect wasabi experience; the later work moves more to the baroque fugues of Bach and Henry Purcell by a touch & go seeker of Basho-like *sabi*.

Though Gilfillan's poetry has changed significantly from *Truck* to *Satin Street* there is a remarkable, deep consistency of *enthusiasm* for a unique and generous set of subjects. These include various regional flora and fauna (especially the avian), Native (and all the other) American immigrant cultures, travel, baroque composers and musicians, small-town diner specials, well-cured friendships.... And throughout, there is a deep, multichannel connection to the literary traditions of East and West, the Old and New Worlds. Gilfillan's enthusiasms can intrigue—the sense of a partially shared secret with the promise of more. Here, at the end the first section of "Mouth of the Whosis," the lines immediately following the musing over the thumbnail in the café respond tangentially to a line of Whitman: "Italian music in Dakota"

Dear Johnny B.  
these compositions are by  
none other than

Alessandro Scarlatti  
and I desire you to tell no one  
that things of the greatest worth  
are concerned.

Given the setting, intrigue lies in the evocation of Scarlatti's baroque cantatas over and against the poem's high-plains landscapes. Fine details, such as the café table-top fingernail, play counterpoint to the river, yielding hosts of wildly divergent, yet elegantly related, associations, as further along in "Mouth of the Whosis" at another river, "The Canadian with the Antelope Hills," it all comes apart/together in an exploded fugue state:

Tengri, "Eternal Blue Sky," Sir: beloved of prairie  
drivers: Thin Air. Christ, the botanical, Comanche in  
the rain. Big Gypsy, the traceless, *gypto americanus* [...]  
Horse breaker, dog eater, chicken thief [...]  
Feather ped-  
[dler wearing an  
ear of corn down in the pants to impress the  
ladies: Big party at 36NW/100W: "Rock Breaks  
Scissors."

In *Call Me Ishmael*, Charles Olson takes "SPACE to be central fact to man born in America from Folsom Cave to now...geography at bottom, a well of wide land from the beginning. That made the first American story... exploration." Though many may now consider the work of "exploration" to be exhausted or irrevocably corrupt (perhaps a symptom of imagining ourselves somehow beyond "history" or separate from "nature"), it is alive in the work of Gilfillan. As Tom Raworth notes on the jacket of *Satin Street*: "Merrill knows the frontier is in the middle and he wants to refresh our senses before that puddle dries in the sun." There is, indeed, an elegiac quality to the poetry, one that inevitably comes with knowledge of where we're at and where we've been. The land changes us as we change it, people move, things come to be and pass and converge, even while technology increasingly speeds the particular remaking of the earth we have been carrying out since we began walking upright, using those opposable thumbs and big brains to make and destroy almost anything and everything in sight. Nevertheless, Gilfillan's work is never bitter, even as the worst waste and cruelty are acknowledged. Rather, the feel is often one of lyric celebration—odic, Whitmanic at heart—fractured though it may need be in recognition of modernity (Spahr's "fracture, flux, searching, exploration,

(Continued on page 18)

## The Old Newness Guides the New Oldness

by Edwin Torres

*(from "A Book Of Questions For The Palindromic Year."  
This was started in 1991 and resumed in 2002 and completed in 2112)*

The first palindromic number is 11. The palindromic years of my lifetime have given me my palindromic birth years. In 1991, I was 33 years old...11 years later in 2002, I'll be 44 years old. This process has illuminated a particular awakening for me, which I will share with you at this point. My Christ year will now give way to my Extra year...which is what I've chosen to name this occurrence. An instant evolution, happening in one swift charge. An 11-year clip at one fell swoop. I have lived as a 33-year old for many years. Adding both numbers, I have carried on like a six-year old and I expect it's now time to act like an eight-year old. For what I imagine will be the next eleven years, or ten...losing the one extra year in the palindromic cycle. Apparition of a lonely year in search of its leap.

The One year was born and went its lifetime looking to be inserted into someone's life. The One year, an only year, flew in and out of humanity granting someone an extra year taken out of someone's life. Having no competition the One year wished to be the Extra year instead. Trapped by its function to begin, desire inserted itself by way of palindrome. Fooling One into becoming New instead of Extra. And One appeared as desire dressed in longing. And One merely waited for revival. And who wants to be new. Anything but new. Shiny newness gets stepped on.

*The last time something new was discovered was when the word New found out it had nothing between its letters. In this way New became Old quickly. An older*

*newness has prevailed over the new Old order. There are now countries standing in line, waiting for this new Oldness. A controlled oldness cultivated by Chaos. If we re-structure the word Chaos and plant it, so it can sprout amongst itself, the old Newness will get re-cultivated. However, the new Oldness will never co-exist with itself, it's got to fold into its own poppy field. For in this reconstruction of the word Chaos, it's been exposed for what it really is. Chaos is a flower. A poppy. / Barefoot in the moon / Saying bye bye to the sky / Saying hi hi to the day / In the bloom / Of barefoot poppies...*

Eleven years later I revert to ten, after this one—to continue my palindromic cycle. Is this my Extra year? In this, my extra year, have I met who I've taken this year from? When I next shake your hand, look into the eye of an extra year. In that glimmer of sleep you may find yours. When I see you next time, remind me of where I was. Or, if it's your job, where I'm going. This portal closes quick and limits exchange, but I am monstrously proportioned for expectation. The burden seems to overwhelm but the connection is inevitable. This is offering you smackheads out there, a lifetime of possessions in my head. But palindromic lifetimes are a dime-a-dozen-nezo-daem-id...and I expect this liberty will soon pass.

You search an entire year for a time you were one. A speed forever out of direction. Trapped in its formulent wings, a new oldness lets translucent days unfurl an entire year as one instant. And this one, right now, has just occurred. And here I cast it frozen in print—on the 3rd day of my extra year I've taken my pen and laid out the beginnings of a promise. And on this the 44th day

I've killed it, needing to travel light. One came down and asked me what I wanted. I was unprepared. After I go through you I'll know what I want, said the palindromic yob looking at his reflection.

And here I ask the listening lickmob...who needs to travel light in a year of reversal? Carry a promise and its burden constricts movement. Surrounded by possessions I am home. Missing my pinkie ring, its replacement lies waiting for me this year. Losing it is a mark for change—I am searching for my next year, to wear on my finger. A band of metal to encircle my skin. No power to it, no morality, no vanity—just a ring. A marker of time identifying its arrival. Possession-possession-passion...surrounded by passion I am most at home. In my head. A lifetime of possessions in my head, their access still renews. The sum total of each palindrome is renewed by the year of its arrival. This year equals 4. The last one equals 20. Take each one in history. The sum total is always even, but this is too easy. Better to take your extra year and say what was done with that time. Loudly. In a room without openings. Surrounded by possessions. Re-invention as the master of sound or dnous for etsam.

To relate the palindromic tendency to your world, filter every occurrence thru your personal history. For example, there's the matter of the palindromic date. Falling on the 33rd day of the palindromic year. Which was the 33rd anniversary of my father's death. This is not fiction. He was taken on an icy road on Feb. 2, 1969. They say he always worked late. They also say he was a womanizer and a poet and that his children were always first. And that his son would re-invent an extra year on this date. Or in the accumulated histories attached to this date.

A palindrome assures continuity. The entry into itself reborn at every passing. Palindromes are the most human word, to become itself in the course of its lifetime—a palindrome reminds itself that, in the end, it is still alive. Still there. This year will be here, still, as a comment on every year. Age as a coward stepping through time.

*It is the first palindromic year / Chaos is a flower in my head / The bees of humanity buzz about me in their glorious stink / It is eleven years from now / Stepping back or forward / Here in the hills of Chaos / Terrains of Discovery reverse themselves / Lifts of weed grow ten miles long / Blades of grass grow ten miles long / They take turns growing into and out of each others / Here in the hills of Chaos there is no trash or waste just Chaos / As far as the eye can see / Can you? / Chaos is*

*a flower / A poppy / Papi, papi / Tell me how I'm gonna grow / Tell me how I'm gonna stand like you do / Tell me how I'm gonna stretch like you do / Tell me how I'm gonna be just like you, o-oh... / Mami, Mami / Tell me how I'm gonna grow / Tell me how I'm gonna dance like you do / Tell me how I'm gonna dream like you do / Tell me how I'm gonna be just like you, o-oh...*

There once was an eleventh day. Greeting itself at every passing moment. A twin. Eleven is the first twin. Knows its island. What surrounds it. What maintains it. In 2001 there was an eleventh day. Its outstanding feature was that fate chose a number any child could understand as a twin. Reflecting on each other, as twins do. Eleven is the first palindromic number. I, the first palindromic word. These twins were placed perfectly. In the order of their missing history, on the eleventh day, I was truly standing. Aware of my beautiful people, moving as one. I submerged my listless demise in awe of the slope's determined slant—gaining on my last name. A speed forever out of my grasp.

Instants reborn in the crossfire. Re-incarnations ready for achievement. What my extra year will bring to someone I haven't met, is the prospect of extra time. The desire for time is deeper for someone who cheats desire. Who rubs from their skin an extra layer of time. This is another desire, to find where extra ends. To state plainly the one extra moment of desire. Or in this time, to else the earlier chance of numbers. Where years reversed. At the start of this writing. Useful now, in this multiplication of skin over human word—clarity in exchange for the understanding of clarity.

I saw this man wearing a shirt today, he was my brother but holding not my brother. How men say brother but really mean gender. Is my gender enough to be home? Half my planet is home. Is year a home? A time once found itself to be time and made itself desire. Half-desire is home.

When walking through your pre-ordained doors, listen for the frictive rub. This starting, to stop and back, this constant travel, noisy in the right light, is endless in reversal's opposite—and, according to your sky, replaces what is time. This is about goal and arrival. About creating once you've landed. In the instant of this, chaos is attractive. Language words as hills, passing back & forth over themselves. This is the instant of itself at home. The palindromic yob loses sih edam-fles at yreve tnat-sni. *Cover me now / My blue fated draper / Date matting undertaker / My blued over-robed coverer / Cover me now...*

This was a boy. A small one of me. Made this instant.  
 From a talk of my own. With someone. Maybe me. This  
 boy was a talking of someone. Made to fit my mouth.  
 My mind. This instant was a boy. Running in place. Saying  
 I had to have been this once—this time in space. I found  
 this home. And where a time found itself to be time—  
 made us make me. What I say is us is made the instant I  
 say us is me. In my mouth what is me is what I desire. I  
 haven't met you yet. But I am sure you will enjoy my  
 time. The one I made for you with my extra year.

\* \* \*

*Edwin Torres received a NYFA Poetry Grant last year. His work is most recently published in Xcp 10 and Ixnay, among other publications. He is series editor of POePI, a bi-annual poetry eJournal, and co-editor of the forthcoming Cities of Chance: An Anthology of New Poetry from America and Brazil, both from Rattapallax Press. His next book is a CD-Rom to be published this Spring by Faux Press.*

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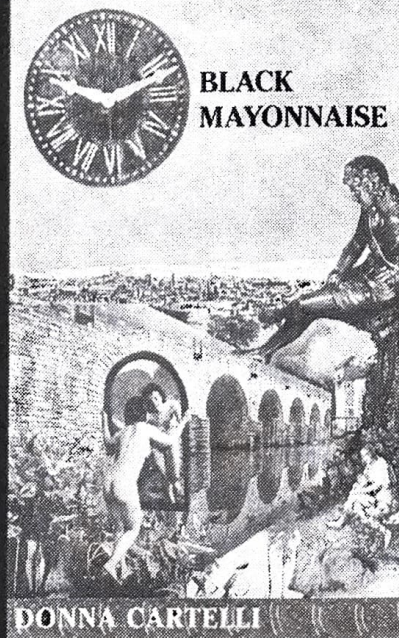
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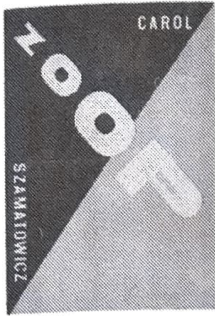
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## Open Reading

Sign-up at 7:30 p.m. [8:00 p.m.]

APRIL 1, MONDAY

## Renee Gladman and Kristin Prevallet

Renee Gladman's *Juice* was published by Kelsey St. Press in 2000. She edits the chapbook imprint Leroy. Kristin Prevallet is the author of *Perturbation*, *My Sister: A Study of Max Ernst's Hundred Headless Woman*, *Scratch Sides* (Skanky Possum) and *The Parasite Poems* (Potes and Poets) are forthcoming in 2002. [8:00 p.m.]

## CONNECT

CONNECT: art, politics, theory, practice, a new interdisciplinary journal, presents an evening of experimental video and film. Featuring Jamie Geiser, Meredith Holch, Jack Waters and others. [10:30 pm]

## Film/Video Night

An evening of collaborations between poets and film makers/ video artists. With work by: Prageeta Sharma/Dale Sherrard, Lisa Lubasch/Sarah Zwierling, Kate Egan/Cort Day, Aaron Kunin/Amie Siegel, Noelle Kocot/Joshua Mosley, Joel Schlemowitz/Wanda Phipps, Brian Blanchfield/Daniel Kleinfeld, Christine Caballero/Jeffrey McDaniel, Joshua Beckman/James Walsh, Adeena Karasick/Marianne Shaneen, Rick Snyder/Eleena Kim, Martha Colburn /99 Hooker, Jennifer Reeves/Lisa Jarnot, Magdalena Zurawski/Bernadine Mellis and Samantha Hunt. [8:00 p.m.]

## Joanne Kyger and Janine Pommy Vega

Joanne Kyger, author of over 20 books of poetry, lives in Bolinas and teaches frequently at Naropa University. Her most recent book is *Again: Poems 1989-2000* (La Alameda Press). Ron Silliman: "She's one of our hidden treasures—the poet who really links the Beats, the Spicer Circle, the Bolinas poets, the New York School, and the Language poets...." Janine Pommy Vega directs Incisions/Arts, an organization of writers working with people behind bars. Her publications number 15 books and chapbooks since 1968. The two latest are *Mad Dogs of the Hostel* and *Selected Poems* (Black Sparrow) and *Tracking the Serpent: Journeys to Four Continents* (City Lights). [8:00 p.m.]

## Black Took: The Wild Reading

The Wild Reading will feature hyper-savage, and anthropometrically resistant yet playful gesticulations in the form of prose, poetry, and much more by the members of the Black Took Collective: Dawn Lundy Martin, Duriel E. Harris, Ronaldo V. Wilson and R. Erica Doyle. All attendees will receive free Coon Journals to record their racialized/sexualized experiences. [10:30 pm]

## Veronica Corpuz and Rodrigo Toscano

Veronica Corpuz is Program Assistant at The Poetry Project and editor of *Poets & Poems*, the Project's online journal. Forthcoming work will appear in the next issues of *Aufgabe* and *Shiny*. Rodrigo Toscano is the author of *Partisans* (O Books), *The Disparities* (Green Integer), and *Platform* (Atelos). Fanny Howe writes: "Rodrigo's poems have emerged as serious, serial shots at the dark...." He lives in NYC where he works at the Labor Institute. [8:00 pm]

## George Economou, Rochelle Owens, and Kazuko Shiraiishi

George Economou has published 7 books of poetry, most recently *Century Dead Center* (Left Hand), and numerous articles and books in the field of medieval English and comparative literature. A pioneer in the experimental off-Broadway theatre movement and an internationally known innovative poet, Rochelle Owens's most recent book is *Luca: Discourse on Life and Death*. Marjorie Perloff writes: "In its uncompromising savagery, its passionate rejection of sentimentality, its black humor, and its sheer outrageousness, Rochelle Owens' lyric voice is unique among contemporary poets." One of Japan's leading poets, Kazuko Shiraiishi's books have received the highest literary awards of her country. Her latest volume of translations is *Let Those Who Appear* (New Directions). [8:00 p.m.]

## The Artist and The Stage

Actors interpret transcripts between artists and interviewers featured in *The Journal of Contemporary Art*, Vol. 7.2 (1995). Actors will interpret the exchanges between artist Annette Messager and Natasha Loeff (directed by Caitlin Gibbon), and Willie Doughterty and Tim Maul (directed by Jay Ward). Performance artist and actor Chris Kaufman (www.harringtonkaufman.com) will present his 25 minute, one-man show, *Nhar*. [10:30 pm]

## A. E. Wayne and Brandon Downing

A.E. Wayne curates the BBR Reading Series in Brooklyn. She is editing a collection of art writings by the poet Barbara Guest. Her own book, *Liary*, is a collaboration with an underwater photographer from Norway. Brandon Downing is the author of *The Shirt Weapon*, just out from Germ Monographs. [8:00 p.m.]

## John Ashbery & Joe Brainard's *The Vermont Notebook*

Readings from *The Vermont Notebook* by John Ashbery, Anselm Berrigan, and Elaine Equi accompanied by slide projections of Joe Brainard's drawings, celebrating Granary Book's republication of this Ashbery/Brainard classic from 1975. John Yau writes, "Perhaps it's everyone's diary that Ashbery has written, and no one's. Joe Brainard's silhouetted Americana becomes the perfect complement." John Ashbery is the author of over 20 books of poetry, including *Girls on the Run: A Poem*, and *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror*, which received the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry. Elaine Equi's most recent books are *Voice Over*, *Friendship with Things*, and *Decoy*. Anselm Berrigan's latest title is *Zero Star Hotel*. A signed, letterpress, limited-edition broadside will be on sale to commemorate the celebration. The 22 x 17 print will cost \$75 until May 1st; \$100 thereafter. Sales will benefit the Poetry Project. [8 p.m.]

## Joy Katz and Mark Turcotte

Joy Katz first collection of poems, *Fabulae*, will be published by Southern Illinois University Press, 2002. Carl Phillips notes: "Katz considers the history and culture we all stand, finally, as heirs to..." Mark Turcotte is the author of four poetry collections, including his newest release, *Exploding Chippewas* (Northwestern). Jim Harrison posits, "In an age when false sincerity is favored over art, Turcotte's work is a corrective." [8:00 p.m.]

## Laura Moriarty and Brian Kim Stefans

Laura Moriarty is the author of several books including *like roads* (Kelsey St. Press, 1990), *Rondeaux* (Roof Books, 1990), and *Nude Memoir* (Krupskya, 2001). She is the Acquisition and Marketing Director for Small Press Distribution. Brian Kim Stefans is the editor of the pdf-format poetry journal *Arras* (www.arras.net) and the author of *Angry Penguins*, (Harry Tankos Books) and *Free Space Comix* (Roof). *Fashionable Noise: On Digital Poetics*, is forthcoming from Atelos Books. [8:00 p.m.]

## Open Reading

Sign-up at 7:30 p.m. [8:00 p.m.]

## C.S. Giscombe and Susan Howe

C.S. Giscombe's most recent books include *Two Sections from "Practical Geography"* (Diaeresis), and *Into and Out of Dislocation* (North Point). He spent several months in northern British Columbia working on *Giscombe Road*, a mixed-genre book about John Robert Giscombe, the Jamaican miner and explorer who lived in Canada in the 19th Century. Ron Silliman comments: "C.S. Giscombe...seek[s] the roots of identity in a poetics that is literally projective: across cultures, centuries, races." Susan Howe is the author of several books of poetry, most recently *Bed-Hangings* (Granary). She is also the author of two landmark books of postmodernist criticism. *The Birth-mark: Unsettling the Wilderness in American Literary History and My Emily Dickinson*. Geoffrey O'Brien writes, "Her work is a voyage of reconnaissance in language, a sounding out of ancient hiding places, and it is a voyage full of risk." [8:00 p.m.]

## War and Peace: A Multimedia Recital of Art, Song and Video

Artists Dayle Vander Sande and Anthony Bellou create songs of poetry and texts from across ages and cultures, interpretive video, and video interviews with people of various backgrounds to create a new "concert theater" experience. [10:30 p.m.]

## Sean Killian and David Perry

Sean Killian's chapbook *Feint By Feint* was published in 1999 by Jensen-Daniels (Talisman). He curates Februaries at Double Happiness and is planning a Catskill Poetry Festival for Summer 2002. David Perry's first book *Range Finder* was published last year by Adventures in Poetry. Kevin Davies writes: "Here's a poet who knows his way around a syllable. The elegance of Schuyler and the dark suburban vision of Ceravolo." [8:00 p.m.]

## Ammiel Alcalay and Cecilia Vicuña

Ammiel Alcalay is a poet, translator, and scholar who has written for *The New York Times*, *The Village Voice*, and *Time*, as well as for such literary journals as *Grand Street* and *Conjunctions*. His most recent title is *Memories of our Future: Selected Essays 1982-1999*. Writing on Cecilia Vicuña, *The Village Voice* says: "This extraordinary Chilean poet explores levels of politics and sensuality, a tensing, inescapable combination." A poet, filmmaker, performance artist and sculptor, Cecilia Vicuña works in the tradition of the oral poetry of the High Andes. Some of her titles include *Palabrar: Morning Star Folio*, and *quipoem/The Precarious*. [8:00 p.m.]

## The New Traditionalists: Compositional and Improvisational Music

The author of four books and a forthcoming collection of short fiction co-authored with Patti Smith, Janet Hamill is a poet and artist who combines her talents with Moving Star musicians Bob Torsello (bass), Jay LoRubbio (guitar), and Sean Healy (drums). Their first full-length CD, *Flying Nowhere*, was produced by Lenny Kaye. Trumpet-, Flugelhorn-, Bass-clarinet-player, and writer, Matt Lavelle's formative years were spent playing with Sir Hildred Humphries. [10:30 p.m.]

## Amanda Schaffer and David Vogen

Amanda Schaffer's work has appeared in *Ploughshares*, *Colorado Review*, and *Spinning Jenny*, among others. David Vogen's work has appeared in *New York Quarterly*, *Cutty Sark* (UK), *Kalte Sterne* (GDR), and *The Poetry Project Newsletter*. [8:00 p.m.]

## Andrei Codrescu and Ed Sanders

Andrei Codrescu's new novel, *Casanova in Bohemia*, is just out from The Free Press. Codrescu is a regular commentator on National Public Radio. He teaches at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, where he edits *Exquisite Corpse: A Journal of Letters & Life*. Ed Sanders founded the legendary Peace Eye Book Store in New York's Lower East Side and the folk rock group the Fugs. His collected poems, *Thriving for Peace in a Raging Century*, won an American Book Award in 1988. [8:00 p.m.]

## Release Party for *Aufgabe*

Release Party for the second issue of *Aufgabe*, a journal that explores innovative poetry inside and outside the U.S. This issue is guest-edited by Rosmarie Waldrop. Readers include Andrew Levy, Veronica Corpuz, Rick Snyder, Edmund Berrigan, Macgregor Card, Paul Foster Johnson, and Kerri Sonnenberg. [8:00 p.m.]

## Michael Brownstein and Peter Lamborn Wilson

Novelist and poet Michael Brownstein will read from *World on Fire* (Open City), his new book about sameness, economic globalization, and the Devil. Author Jerry Mander says, "Michael Brownstein has written an epic, visionary, kaleidoscopic treatise/poem...." Peter Lamborn Wilson has been a visiting faculty member of Naropa University for many years. A member of the Automedia collective, he is the author of high and low publications from science fiction zines to studies in mystical literature. [8:00 p.m.]

## Fence Book Reading

Michael Earl Craig is the author of *Can You Relax in My House* and lives in Montana. Joyelle McSweeney, author of *The Red Bird*, is a graduate of the Iowa Writers Workshop. Chelsey Minnis, author of *Zirconia*, is a native resident of Littleton, Colorado. Catherine Wagner, author of *Miss America*, lives in Boise, Idaho. [10:30 p.m.]

## Spring Workshop Reading

[8:00 p.m.]

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(Continued from page 11)

changing states of being"). With humor and pictorial insight worthy of William Carlos Williams' urban pastorals, Gilfillan's writing helps to true skewed human perspective, placing the individual *in* the wide world without making man the measure of anything much more than "man," as in the "St. Vicinity" segments from *Rivertown's* cycle "The Rights of Man":

[...] Flats cut by runnels  
broken by breaks.  
The crest. The seep.  
The dufus near the peak.

[...] A grassy bench  
on the lower slope of  
the butte. A dry wash.  
The dork. A cove . . .

Gilfillan's work offers resistance and hope to a world that can often seem either too much with us or too far gone to retrieve, as the rush of personal exploration, aided by generous humor, cuts through the always-encroaching melancholy which comes with knowledge, forging connections, finding lost things and losing habits, yielding what Gaston Bachelard calls, in *The Poetics of Space*, "quite simple images of *felicitous space*" which "seek to determine the human value of

which "the 20th century ... roared by and left/three men, still hungry on the tracks" and:

The last bear, shot drinking in the Dakotas  
Loped under wires that span the mountain stream.  
Keen instruments, strung to a vast precision  
Bind town to town and dream to ticking dream.  
But some men take their liquor slow—and count  
—though they'll confess no rosary or clue—  
The river's minute by the far brook's year.

As with space, time is of the essence, with "time" in Gilfillan working in the impossible fullness of history concentrated in and by the poetic, contemplative moment: "*All ages are contemporaneous*," he writes in "Allday Purcell," (*Satin Street*). This is not to say that the specificity of the given here and now is lost in the conceit of encompassing totality, rather, as that American one Clark Coolidge puts it: "Living in the memory of everything, America." Frequently for Gilfillan, as for Whitman, "Whatever it is, it avails not—distance avails not, and place avails not." It is measured by neither clock nor calendar, but by the rhythms hit upon in our peculiar living.

It is within those moments dilated by contemplation and the constant reorientation demanded by human movement that Gilfillan's attentiveness to the blending of the various auras of earth, artifacts and people gives rise to a poetry simultaneously in and out of *now*, right here and yet out there: "Time is the solo of space" ("Homage to Balzac," *River Through Rivertown*). The

finale of *Satin Street's* "Salute: On Peoples Creek" provides as good an example as any of the ability of this expanded poetic awareness to contain modest multitudes, as in these lines sprung from Montanan etymological lore:

...the Atsinas say long ago a wild colt  
with human head was born  
along this stream. They glimpsed him  
now and then, called him *Init' \_ i:*  
"Person," "The Person"  
(the English version smudged it,  
river jumping track).

**The word "Western" neatly splits—Western world, American West—revealing an object lesson in human nature and history...**

the sorts of space that may be grasped, that may be defended against adverse forces, the space we love." Though Bachelard had more "intimate" spaces in mind, Gilfillan's vision imparts a sense of an open-air consciousness (and conscience) in which travel and writing merge in a rough automotive analog to the nomadic existence of the Kiowa, Kansa and other, more recent, explorers of the continent (settlers, hobos, travelers of all kinds), finding intimacy in the open field and communion in recasting "the first American story." There is, too, a good deal in Gilfillan of the American inside-outsider-Romantic of Hart Crane's "The River," in

Born and reared along this stream,  
roamed it all his loversnuds life.

And did those feet  
e pluribus unum?

Not that we inhabit  
a deprived age.  
Not that we inhabit  
an age at all—  
Switching deerflies  
in the goldenrod  
with a girlfaced blackbird  
on his back.

*To Creature*, a small collection published in 1975, marks a slight but significant change of course in Gilfillan's poetry. The poems of the earlier work, including *To Creature*, possess a hyperspace velocity that in later work graduates to a steadier musing gait punctuated by moments of repose and recollection. 1982's *River Through Rivertown* runs closer to the measured play of recent work such as "Mouth of the Whosis" than it does to the restless youthful energy embodied by the work of the late 60s and 70s.

*To Creature's* poems move with the speed of "Mayakovsky, Georgia to NYC, 8-1/2 Seconds," in which "Fragments of the greek / for Admiral de Nerval, who requested / moonlight through the pines / expecting something fabulous, / so modern in cream plastic boots / with white zippers opening on Georgia" spin off into a fractured narrative that sends its roguish persona flying through "ricochet nightclubs" in pursuit of his shady boss, "Vamos the Huge," dodging "meteoric fame roaring into microphones / for a canned laughter business" until they finally land "near the paisleys to sleep in Tie City" by way of a dinner party featuring "Von Braun" and "The red beans, bueno. / The little black beans, bueno! So hungry // we eat them right out of the boots."

In *Light Year's* "Cornstalk Monument," the persona finds "this week's favorite interplanetary detail" in "Burroughs pulling off the highway just outside New Orleans, too stoned to drive. Heavy traffic, the Louisiana sky a sponge ..."

By the time of 1997's *Satin Street*, things have time to settle, and memory becomes as important as imagination, even to the point that:

We have the travelessness,  
The distillation, the stirring  
And the basting, leaving  
one's wandering figment to carry on,  
miniature Tarzan/  
Astaire hybrid always out there  
In the non-voluntary imagination [...]

("Solstice Letter")

Such reflection on the poet's past-in-poetry is one of the subtler joys of *Satin Street*, one which comes clear when read alongside the poetry of the younger Gilfillan, whose Tarzan/Astaire act lights up the earlier work with stunning leaps and turns, if sometimes less sure-footedly than those of the older poet. Gilfillan's early work revels in the same fundamental enthusiasms as the later, even while paying homage to Burroughs or Rimbaud, looking to pawn hot jewels or score some absinthe in *To Creature*. The land, history, people, the plants and animals, music, all dissolve in the natural poetic imagination: "the carburetor function of *otherwise* in everyday life" ("Mouth of the Whosis"). Gilfillan's poetry, like the rivers which are the source of so much inspiration, merges with and emerges from the edges and features of the changing landscape where possibility teems, as in *River Through Rivertown's* "The Rights of Man," putting subtle yet radical spin on enlightenment:

*The Right to Dance*

You may mother may I  
in Wm. Bartram  
the possibility of meeting strangers  
deep in the forest  
giving away fawnskins  
of wild honey.

\*

(Big brown eyes:  
Sleepy  
little space station town

• • •

David Perry is the author of *Range Finder (Adventures in Poetry, 2001)*. Poems have recently appeared in *The Poetry Project Newsletter*, *Insurance and Sal Mimeo*. He lives in Brooklyn.

## Shuntaro Tanikawa: Selected Poems

Trans. by William I. Elliott and Kazuo Kawamura  
Persea Books/New York, 2001

Shuntaro Tanikawa's *Selected Poems* (an earlier title, *The Selected Poems of Shuntaro Tanikawa* was published by North Point Press in 1983) is one of eleven volumes of his work available in English. Two of the available titles are translated by Harold Wright, the rest, including this Selected, fall under the skillful hands of Tanikawa's dedicated translators William I. Elliott and Kazuo Kawamura. During an intimate, sustained friendship across thirty-some years with Tanikawa, Elliott and Kawamura have translated forty-three volumes of Tanikawa's poetry in close consultation with the poet himself. Their version of Tanikawa's *Floating the River in Melancholy*, a section of which appears in *Selected Poems*, won a 1989 American Book Award.

Shuntaro Tanikawa is the son of a well-known philosopher and scholar, Tetsuzo Tanikawa, who once served as president of Tokyo's Hosei University and whose favorite poet was Walt Whitman. In his last year of high school the young Tanikawa announced he would not go on to the university, but become a poet instead. For the next few years he wrote and published in periodicals. In 1952 his first book appeared with the bold title *Two Billion Light-Years of Solitude*. He was twenty-one. Since then his published works to date number some sixty volumes. His poems are regularly found in school textbooks, on radio and television poetry spots, in intellectual and literary magazines, and on commercial bookshelves from Hokkaido to Okinawa. Even in these times when bookstores yearly reduce their poetry shelf-space inch by inch, a sales figure of 20,000-30,000 copies is not a rarity for a single book of his verse. Acknowledgment must be given him for being a dynamic moving force in expanding and educating the Japanese readership of poetry since 1952.

Modern Japanese poetry means non-classic poems written under Western influences beginning in 1868 when the international window opened on the outside world and the influence of French, English and American poetic practices began showing up. In this collection published in 1998, that includes poems from eleven books written over the course of his ongoing fifty year career, we enjoy the fruit of that modernity

and witness the stunning range of feelings, ideas and forms Tanikawa has created in his work. The contents follow a chronology beginning with Tanikawa's first book in 1952 and continuing through the eleven titles to the latest included book published in 1995, always a superior format with a selected that allows the reader first-hand experience of the poet's development.

The colloquial outbursts and stunning imaginative leaps in the poems "Two Billion Light-Years of Solitude" and "A Night" recall the work of Ron Padgett as free associations nonchalantly progress in a breathtaking succession of French surrealist and dadaist images. Tanikawa seems willing to step off a ship's plank and then unto another plank on a ship that just happens to be passing at the precise second his foot alights and then to step off that plank and so on. The poet challenges the reader's perceptions of the possible in works that begin in everyday realism and end by going out of nature's bounds. Or he begins in a routine fashion casually declaring some wondrous immediacy, the kind we love in a Jimmy Schuyler poem. Or in the style of Miyazawa Kenji we see Tanikawa suddenly frightened on an unfamiliar street. Nature's regular attributes turning sinister, converging to make the poet uneasy, strange, alone and feeling bizarrely desolate. Here too we see him call on the terminology of the meteorologist as Miyazawa does, to heighten perception of the threat of uncontrollable forces around us.

In his prolific range of works Tanikawa expands a variety of forms from love letters to clinical observations, always stretching the language and shape of the poem to come to terms with the given occasion. Yet Tanikawa has rebelled against the necessity of using language. He is a strong believer in the Japanese aesthetic "the less said the better." Empty space and the long positive pause hang invisible between the words in his works. In poems he writes "At this moment I am speechless.... There is a door a key of words will not open.... Words don't take flight; are aborted. They just don't come...." He has insisted on silence and on the sounds in that silence that must become words: "This sound, also, is a word." But he knows that as a poet he must use the vehicle of his craft: "I keep silence, which is also criminal,..." In his wrestling with language he proves that no poet is better than he is at stating a reluctance to use words.

It is useless to begin with silence  
and grope for words.  
If I am to achieve silence  
I must begin with words.

—MAUREEN OWEN

## The History of the Invitation: New and Selected Poems, 1963-2000

by Tony Towle  
Hanging Loose Press, 2001

*The History of the Invitation* offers a comprehensive selection of Tony Towle's poems, spanning four decades, glossed with essays by Ron Padgett, Charles North, Paul Violi, and Jack Kimball. It restores to print Towle's pop-collage classic, "Lines for the New Year" (1964-65), and a major portion of *North*, winner of the Frank O'Hara Award in 1970. A fresh reading of early works alongside recent accomplishments will provide followers of the New York School with an enlarged appreciation for one of its most assured and engaging masters. At any rate, Towle need no longer remain, as Ashbery has remarked, one of that school's "best kept secrets."

Under the tutelage of O'Hara, Towle developed a distinctive and wide-ranging lyric style, high-flown and quirky—admitting jokes, metaphysical ponderment, and rhapsodic elegizing. By the 1970s Towle's own brand of avant-garde Gongorism began to provide, as Violi remembers, "an inspiring alternative to the dry, lifeless linguistic exercises into which some experimental poetry was beginning to sink."

Already, in "Lines for the New Year" (mid-wived by Frank O'Hara through late night phone calls), Towle deftly avoided the opacity that stiffened and dulled some patches of O'Hara's own New York epic, "Second Avenue"—a poem that aspired to the condition of action painting. Attuned to inadvertent ironies in composition that affects to *be* its subject and not just *about* it, Towle, in parody of the blind-sided hubris of "I," would disperse into multiple personae and unfurl, while rolling out the magnanimous poly-vocal structure, his peculiar nerviness and fraught imagination: "My / thinking is so zany it's not worth worrying about. I am speaking/ for the community as a whole. There are so many things to do that/ everyone can find something to like." And, with droll salience, as if to say that speech is the action that seeks to rest in a poem: "I come back feeling weak. You/ get tired of jumping from icefloe to icefloe...."

Towle's canny attentiveness to dislocations—of person, place, and time—is often disposed towards elegy and points to the persistence of aesthetic feeling

through loss. An emblem of this appears where word of Ted Berrigan's death opens a space in the sky ("the one where we didn't know each other"), and a quaint allegory of the sister arts, poetry and painting, descends in harmonious repair: "At this point a painter/ could reach down/ for a little cerulean blue to cover the hole in the sky/ while I search out a caption for the scroll below" ("July 6th").

The luminous detail can perform a vital function for Towle: "I move my foot from the coal sack/ and distinguish the first pale particulars of morning./ The strains of a lute touch the delicate strands of light/ and lead her enormous beauty from the resting arms of night" ("Swinburne: End of the Century"). We are struck first by the preposterousness of the coal sack, its oddity, and next by its resonance as a "deep image." The strangeness and accidental profundity of the coal sack transform the image into a holograph that kindles and enables the symbolist riffing that follows in the quatrain.

In "Osiris" inspiration is a subtle blazon of the synaesthetic: "The muse's perfume drifts across the keys,/ she is in the room promising a caress, / a draft alive within my ear, / an air of coolness and drowsy inertia....the dizzy feel of an empty sky,/ a woman naked and arched,/ falling so that I enter without limits." Towle is comfortable with artifice, and the poem progresses with Parnassian intricacy and precision toward the achieved exaltation of the last line.

Towle seldom fails to obey the lyric imperatives, to corral his materials into the confines of a traditional lyric poem. For all their shuffling and sifting, their randomness and hilarity, the poems tend to resolve themselves with Horatian decorum and elegance: "I yield, finally,.../permitted by a bountiful nature,/ with whose order I do not fundamentally disagree" ("Works on Paper"). This yielding is consistent with the amiable tenor of the poems, the humility that underwrites their candor—"the resources of language/ [being] greater than oneself and thereby liberating" ("Addenda"). It is a real pleasure reading Towle's new and selected poems. I only wish I could better explain why these poems are so affecting, so able to sound, as Charles North has said, such "an extraordinary depth of feeling." With this new volume it will be, as Towle himself has written, "difficult not to embellish my life."—GEORGE GREEN

Xq28<sup>1</sup>  
by Jennifer Martenson  
Burning Deck, 2001

Behind the sparse, minimalist design of Jennifer

Martenson's chapbook *Xq28<sup>1</sup>*, there lies a complex network of clustered annotations and cross-references that point, not to a text within the body of the book but to texts outside itself. In one instance she points to Monique Wittig, another to Wollstonecraft. However, underlying the very form of *Xq28<sup>1</sup>* is a fictional scientific text that critiques the human genome project, particularly that of the gene *Xq28*, thought to be linked to homosexuality. Taking the formal tone of scientific research, Martenson employs a satirical, playful approach to the controversial debate over the "gay gene" that first made headlines in 1993 and the irresolvable argument over "nature vs. nurture."

Quite literally, there is no "base" text for these footnotes; the pages are blank except for the small footnotes that include their own smaller footnotes like multiple genes nestled within multiple chromosomes. From the onset of this slim chapbook, the very first line acknowledges that there is no gene for lesbianism nor have scientists sought one out: "The 'gay gene'<sup>2</sup> ...pertains only to male homosexuality." Thus with the first outcrop of a footnote within a footnote, the reader is propelled through multiplicitous reading directions, through rabbit holes of cross references. It is this proliferation of reading strategies and circuits I found to be a delightful ride.

In addition to the complex nexus of these discursive strands, I also enjoyed Martenson's sharp wit that enlivens these pages all the while foregrounding her investigation of gender, sexuality, biological and political agency:

This process [of banning] is known as *indoctrination*: traditions normally stored in the form of two vines wrapped around the status quo separate in order to guarantee the reproduction and survival of laboriously alienating complacency.

To footnote a reference for "women," or a "A dense, fibrous tissue," Martenson writes:

Originating in the earliest discursive stages, and now in an advanced state of decay, it directs most of our unconscious processes, such as breathing, heart rate, blinking, sexual harassment, marriage, internal temperature, and the continual growth and multiplication of all manner of double standards.

Never settling upon "the body" as sole site of resistance, nor the socio-political-economic sphere as site of insurgency, Martenson's work suggests an opposition to simple binary divisions and perhaps an invocation for *multiple relations of ruling* (to borrow the phrase from Chandra Mohanty). Possibly, this chapbook hints at the "linguistic adaptation" or "semiotic

antibodies" as a point of confluence where these binaries, e.g. social codes of conduct and genetic codes (or computer codes), may merge. —VERONICA CORPUZ

## All Prose by William Corbett Zoland Books, 2001

William Corbett is best known as a poet, but he has also written several prose books, *New York Literary Lights*, *Literary New England*, *Philip Guston's Late Work: A Memoir*, and *Furthering My Education*, the story of his father's abrupt disappearance from his life in 1965. After reading his collection of essays, reviews, and personal reflections on art and artists, poetry and poets, music and movies and his own life, *All Prose*, I felt as if I had been taken on a long walking tour by a guide whose commentary made me look again, see again. The peripatetic quality of these works comes from the almost tangible presence of the writer himself. He is there because the real, sensual world lies behind his every encounter, whether it be with a painting, a poem or another human being. The reader moves with the writer, down city streets, in and out of galleries and museums, cars, airplanes, and houses. The grounded lyric voice of Corbett's poems is loosened and given a new rhythm in the prose, but it is not changed in essence. The surprising particularity of the poems is here, too, the detail that lifts an ordinary thing out of banality and into a new and shining singularity. And, as in the poems, there is humor and wit, sometimes with a bite, that makes this tour of the arts even more fun.

Corbett's translations of visual experience into words inevitably combine the abstract and the corporeal—on Soutine: "They are hot, personal paintings that might leave you gasping for breath." On Mapplethorpe: "The devil in him was a risk taker whose sharp eye did not blink, and who did not flinch from putting into order the worlds that most interested him." On the collaboration between Philip Guston and Clark Coolidge *Baffling Means*: "They were not like Picasso and Braque, 'two mountaineers roped together,' but rather like two burrowers, sandhogs, digging in and sifting through their own and each other's obsessions." On de Kooning: "For me, these late pictures are all air on which a brush or trowel has ice-skated. The colors swish into forms with the sound of skates on hard ice..."

I can't begin to cover all that there is in this book, but let me say that it includes a wonderful portrait of Charles Olson, "The Big O," as a friendly,

abstruse giant who flings his still-lit cigarette butts at the kitchen door; the story of Basil Bunting's stay at the Corbett house in Boston, during which the great poet "charges" up the stairs with William's daughter, Arden, on his back; a beautiful essay on Joe Brainard, in which we see the artist stuffing ten and twenty dollar bills into the pockets of a young poet; a short, vivid piece on Thelonius Monk that begins: "It happened all right. Monk did bum a Camel from me, and a light." There are three exercises in astute and thoroughly invigorating outrage against *The American Poetry Review*, Clement Greenberg, and Helen Vendler, as well as a moving coda to *Furthering My Education* that fills in the last pieces of a man's life.

In spite of their diversity, these essays are part of a whole, unified by the spirit that generated them—expansive, curious, honest, and uncommonly alert. There is no received knowledge here, no truck with clichés or hackneyed ideas. The sensibility is keen but not contemptuous, alive to comedy but never cruel, and always resistant to theories, grandiose or puny, that seek to reduce, pinch or denature the thing in question. In the end, *All Prose* is a work of love for art and for the people who make it, but its declared passions are mobile rather than static. Its pages are hymns to the ongoing and the underway. All that is required of the reader is to tag along and keep walking.—SIRI HUSTVEDT

## Drive Through the Blue Cylinders

by Ed Friedman  
Hanging Loose, 2001

In the past few months, every media outlet has been hyping the domestic sphere as the next "big thing." While reservations for Galapagos tours plummet, sales of Martha Stewart electric fire logs and wedding magazines go through the roof. It seems like a safe assumption that the experience of being at home feels fundamentally different from the experience of exploring an exotic local. Ed Friedman's new book *Drive Through the Blue Cylinders* shakes up this easy duality. In his witty and gently ironic new poems, he shows how mercurial, sweet and bizarre the experience of the "familiar" can be.

What I enjoy most about this book is the way that as a reader I'm made to feel as if there's essentially no difference between the experience of watching an "antelope stag dance" and taking a bath. The speaker approaches both occurrences with the same awed, or "aw shucks," tone. Because of his gift for odd sly word choice, "a fish walking by smoking a pipe" is no

stranger or more surprising than a couple's freshly "denuded" skin.

This faux naïve approach is clearly a moral and philosophical choice. In the poem "Moisten, Dry," after describing the speaker looking at and imagining exotic postcards, Friedman writes "When we get home and apply our new-found imagination to the rigors of everyday life, it will be no trouble to replace lightbulbs and governments, housing tracks and vegetable gardens." These lines are somewhat self-pardoning. It is funny to think about changing a government as easily as one would change a light bulb. Still, the irony in this line is far from total. Throughout the book, while the speaker chastises himself for not being more politically involved, he also seems to believe that the freedom that comes from recognizing and loving what you can not understand or contain has a utopian potential. As he writes in "Waves of Wonder,"

Could there be a clarity resembling revolution at heart—  
fullness without narrowed conscious intention? Here's  
what I mean—something one could look back on and say,  
"How did I ever do that? I mean what were we thinking?"  
(italics mine)

The change of pronouns here is telling and related to the idea expressed. Throughout the collection, Friedman, an heir of Ashbery and Whitman, switches pronouns, between "I" "we" and "you." It is difficult to know the difference between these words because in the world he describes people are more "themselves" (which is often not their "selves" at all but some form of animal) when they are around others whom they love. There is no difference between "home" and "away" because one's relationship to other minds is ultimately what determines *where* one is.—JOANNA FUHRMAN

## Western Capital Rhapsodies

by Marcella Durand  
Faux Press, 2001

A boundary of kinds against which you stand outlined:  
You the border guard and I the questioner  
(*"Indicia"*)

In Marcella Durand's long awaited first book of poems, the boundary against which her I and You stands outlined is the city in its many incarnations. The poet's eye sees the city as mirage; city as fragile; city as the sea; as delicatessen and flower; farm and volcano; as continually revealing itself. The surroundings themselves are foregrounded, and the idea of place is pushed outward to explore the consciousness of discov-

ery. Durand's poems read as if architecture and mountains are built on a bedrock of wonder.

Although the speaker looks and sees with a heightened sense of awareness, she is not a tourist, but a perpetual explorer. The landscape contains an often cruel history (land-rule, land claim) and the deficiencies that are so apparent in our economic system:

Ready to support the steaming entrails,  
the corporate need, the CEO with  
complicated desires, the manliness  
and glass ceilings. The translucency  
and economy....

("Machine into Water 13")

Of course this also means an utter sense of displacement, as the city is seen as an unfamiliar alien-  
scape. The paradox is that it is the speaker's home, yet it is moving and changing so rapidly that it can never really be familiar. Instead, the city becomes familiar in the noun sense, like an animal presence that is alive and ultimately unknowable but coexisting comfortably alongside us. Each detail, from the small (arrangement of furniture) to the large (the north star, air, etc.), is ultimately unknowable, exciting, and strange in its ongoing presence and possibility.

The city is also a means of communication, and the reader becomes the antennae—a word that applies to both insect and machine, but makes us part of a larger whole, the part that receives and imparts communication.

Wide band function shifts into receiver  
of somatosensology: and that means spatial,

the state of the body and surroundings.  
I write to you that you think you are

an antennae. You feel the sky is weighing

("City of Ports 22")

The ways that Durand uses arrangement, sound, and image repetition are incredibly effective at creating a multi-layered texture that captures the larger scale of landscape through its small, intimate details. Things happen all at once as if each image is a layer in an infinite story, as if all stories or all books were piled up one on top of another with a hole bored down through them; the result is a cross-section that reveals the remote proximity of all possible images and histories. This effect is especially apparent in the two extended serial poems, "City of Ports," and "Machine into Water," and the lovely, smaller series "Reading Postures."

These beautiful poems ultimately come down to an I, a you, and the landscape around them, which makes

me wonder if among the many possible discoveries in these poems is love: love poems to another person in the landscape, to the landscape itself, to having a sense of place at all.

grass strict against the horizon. So call

to me across the waves of a thousand shores  
and the dying light of irresistible trajectories.

("City of Ports 6")

—KAREN WEISER

## **The Genuine Negro Hero** by Thomas Sayers Ellis The Kent State University Press, 2001

*The Genuine Negro Hero* appropriately begins with an excerpt from Anthony Smith's *The Body* entitled "The Eye"; for it is through sight, vision, and perception Ellis investigates politics and race, culture and memory (historical as well as personal), in this collection of deftly crafted poems.

Divided into two untitled sections, the chapbook opens with a voyage through the cinematic lens of Zapruder, the man who captured on film the emblematic images of the 1963 JFK assassination. Interestingly, the poem "Zapruder" invokes the notion of authenticity—of the film itself, of history, of political conspiracies. For the reader, what is inside the frame, what we see, may change and dissolve; fact, fiction, artifact, and memory blur and refocus.

In "A Kiss in the Dark," the film reels and mind reels intertwine as Ellis blends movie with memory, zeroing in on the interplay between light, darkness and shadow:

I watched their black shadows on the wall,  
half expecting fade-out and something romantic  
as the final scene of *Love Crazy*, my father  
a suave William Powell, my mother's slender body  
a backwards C in the tight focus of his arms—  
close-shot, oneiric dissolve, jump cut to years  
before their separation and the arrival of hot water.

Shifting from the personal space to the public space of a darkened movie theater, Ellis conjures up images of the underground railroad: "A silhouette behind a flashlight/led us down an aisle/into The Shadow World,/rows & rows of runaways/awaiting emancipation" ("Slow Fade to Black"). By referencing Pam Grier and Richard Roundtree, Ellis points towards the blaxploitation films of the 70s and their super-sly ghetto heroes. Yet is this the genuine Negro hero? I

would say they are not, since these images flicker with "...miracles/not worth building dreams on"—especially since these characters, although they presented strong, assertive figures, resulted in racist stereotypes often constructed within a white cinematic framework.

The second section shifts its focus to visual art—as in the piece “HEADS (ALL CAPS), 1989” a reflection on the neon forms of artist Bruce Nauman and the poem “Cowboy Minimalism” for collage artist Michelle Weinberg—as well as a more inward reflection upon the self (“My Autopsy”) and Ellis’s own poetics illuminated in “The Genuine Negro Hero.” In this piece we glimpse into Ellis’s literary methodology and heritage:

Always, in whatever I’ve written—prose or “slave” verse—I’ve had a burning desire to be percussive and to create the kind of compositions that resemble a literary, mini-March on Washington...Of style, I can honestly write that I am only interested in mixed congregations...

The rest of the piece indeed sings with the funk and Motor City spirits of James Brown, The Supremes, The Four Tops, Marvin & Tammi, and The Temptations: “What is Soul and what should Soul-style do: a Supafly-trap and tight ass ’llac, hustle and hook. Deuce Triple O I-am-bic, the O a mouth out the shout to Oral, as in folk, swung low. O Lore.”

In one of the last poems of the section, Ellis returns to the thematic thread of sight and vision with anaphora: “My eyes are women surrounded by lesbian graves...My eyes sleep in two dark rooms under a shaved/And combed universe. My eyes are sisters... Next, I’m sending them to sea.”

A musicality and attention to startling images offer readers a glimpse into the imagination of Ellis, the poetic sight seer. Mesmerized, they won’t even stop to answer “if and how long the hypnosis will last?”—  
VERONICA CORPUZ

## A Found Life

by Elio Schneeman  
Telephone Books, 2001

In 1997, the world of poetry went into shock at the news that Elio Schneeman had been found dead of a drug overdose. That a life so full of promise was so tragically taken away was, for this old poet anyway, almost unbearable. He’d had only one book published, *Along the Rails*, by United Artists Books, a book of immense talent, where it seemed that at last the inheritor of such great sonneteers as Ted Berrigan and Edwin Denby had been found. I, along with Tom Savage, read with Elio in 1993 at The Poetry Project, since all

three of us had just had our books released by Lewis Warsh’s press, and the place was packed with such poets as Allen Ginsberg and Anne Waldman. Most I felt had come to hear Elio, our young prince, read. And read he did, intensely, whispery, a shy, faraway look on his handsome face, but a much too short set: unexpectedly, prophetically short. Then, just four years later, dead. Now, Maureen Owen’s Telephone Books has blessed us with what I presume will be the last of Elio’s books ever to be seen, and it is an occasion for joy. Here is Elio’s voice come back to us again, and if he is not the poet of the kind of beautifully melancholic and romantic reverie I thought I’d never read again, in this age of blips and soundbytes, then who on earth is? Take the poem “Descent”:

It is the descent of evening  
that I long for,  
The day’s shadows lengthening  
across a pale lawn

The mind crosses a river,  
forgetful in absence  
yet wakening anew  
love which erases memory  
you get on and off  
desire like a train  
evening evaporates  
clouds  
sponge themselves off  
such damp promises  
float  
in this cup of coffee  
where your hips move  
my pillow  
for the night

Still, Elio could get terribly real, as in “November on Duke Ellington Boulevard”: “Here, where plastic lids/of crack vials/litter the street/amid the broken/applause of morning/the homeless man is asleep,/cigarette burning in his hand.” There is music in all these poems, a Metallica rock dirge, a jazz, why the very blues. I count 61 glistening new works in this collection, all moving elegies for the woman he loved, the city he loved, and for a life that this poet found so hauntingly lovely and yet so hard to live. Yes, the genius of Duke Ellington would have found the music for this music, but only Elio Schneeman could have found the words.

Had he lived, I believe that Elio Schneeman would indeed have been discovered by today’s ever doomed/restless youth to become the voice/prophet of their generation. In this harrowing time we all live in, as cities burn, and where’s to turn, here he is, Elio Schneeman, and he sings again.—BILL KUSHNER



"Michael Brownstein has written an epic, visionary, kaleidoscopic treatise/poem that, amazingly, attempts to make sense of and show a way through the rich madness of our time . . . Partly wail of pain, partly ode to nature and human spirit, partly a last-ditch effort to consciously click back to a sustainable pathway, this book will leave the reader simultaneously exhausted, enlightened, depressed, and exhilarated."

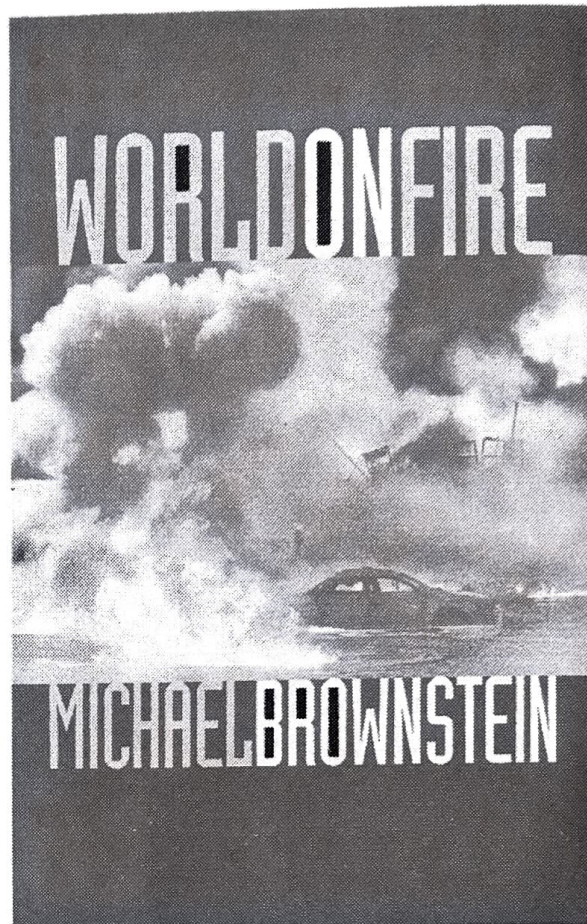
—Jerry Mander, author of *In the Absence of the Sacred*, and President, *International Forum on Globalization*

"One possibility: we spend the next six thousand years watching TV and 'interacting' with our computers. Another: we could allow Global Capital to wipe out life on Earth and get it over with. Or else: we could repent before it's too late. Michael Brownstein's text (combination Jeremiah, Milton, Blake, and sci-fi horror movie) is either the last possible book—or else a blueprint for the first real revolution since the Neolithic."

—Hakim Bey, Author of *T.A.Z.: The Temporary Autonomous Zone*

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Spring 2002

**Oskar Pastior, *Many Glove Compartments: Selected Poems***

[Dichten=, #5; trans. Harry Mathews, Christopher Middleton, Rosmarie Waldrop, with a guest appearance by John Yau] Pastior is not interested in naming, in "Adam, that old Stalin of language," but in a metabolism where words and concepts are made flesh. He is the only German member of OULIPO. "Pastior's humor is the only legitimate kind beside black humor which of course also darkly lights up here"—*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. "A must for those who like their poetry both rigorous and a touch mad"—Charles Bernstein.

Poems, 120 pages, offset, smyth-sewn, ISBN 1-886224-44-7, original paperback \$10

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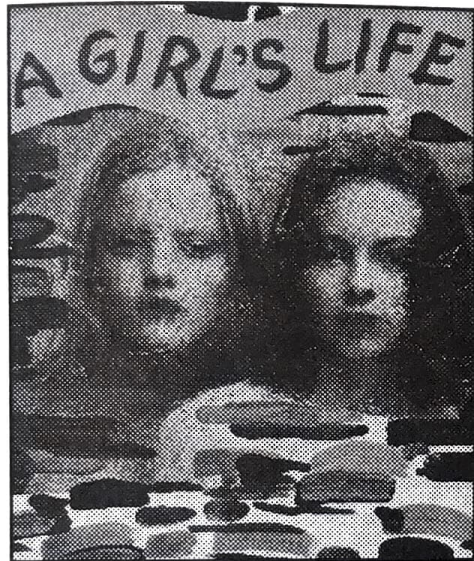
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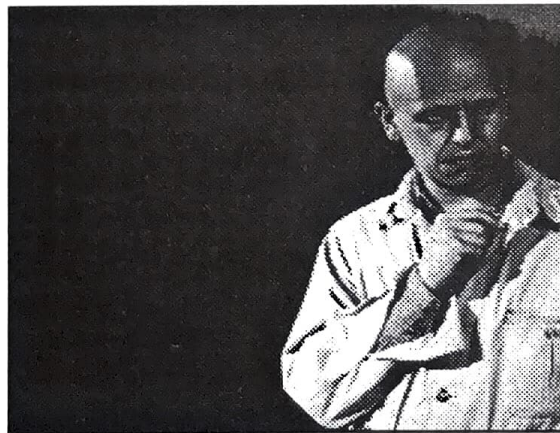
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# BOOKS Received

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Michael Brownstein, **World on Fire**.  
Open City Books, 2002.

Reed Bye, **Gaspar Still in His Cage**.  
Smokeproof Press, 2002.

Maxine Chernoff, **World**. Salt  
Publishing, 2001.

Del Ray Cross, **Cinema Yosemite**.  
Pressed Wafer, 2002.

Rachel Blau DuPlessis, **Drafts 1-38**,  
**Toll**. Wesleyan University Press, 2001.

Clayton Eshleman, **Companion  
Spider: Essays**. Wesleyan, 2001.

John High, **Bloodline**. Talisman  
House, 2002.

Paul Hoover, **Rehearsal in Black**. Salt  
Publishing, 2001.

Alice Jones, **Extreme Directions**.  
Omnidawn Publishing, 2002.

Andrew Joron, **The Emergency of  
Poetry**. Velocities Chapbook Series,  
2002.

Lisa Linn Kanae, **Sista Tongue**.  
Tinfish, 2002.

Myung Mi Kim, **Commons**. University  
of California Press, 2002.

Susan Landers, **28 mgs**. 50¢ off press,  
2002.

David Lehman, **The Evening Sun**.  
Scribner, 2002.

John Moritz, **Cartography**. First  
Intensity Press, 2001.

Eileen Myles, **On My Way**. Faux Press,  
2001.

Geoffrey G. O'Brien, **The Guns and  
Flags Project**. University of California  
Press, 2002.

Rochelle Owens, **Luca: Discourse on  
Life and Death**. Junction Press, 2002.

Seido Ronci, **The World of  
Difference**. Pressed Wafer, 2002.

Kim Rosenfield, **Good Morning-  
Midnight**. Roof Books, 2001.

Andrew Schelling, **Tea Shack Interior**.  
Talisman House, 2002.

Caroline Sinavaiana-Gabbard,  
**Alchemies of Distance**. subpress /  
Tinfish / Institute of Pacific Studies,  
2001.

Rod Smith, **The Good House**.  
Spectacular Books, 2001.

**Telling It Slant: Avant-Garde Poetics  
of the 1990s**, Ed. by Mark Wallace  
and Steven Marks. University of  
Alabama, 2002.

**Three Vietnamese Poets**, trans. Linh  
Dinh. Tinfish Press, 2001.

Tony Towle, **Memoir 1960-1963**. Faux  
Press, 2001.

Liz Waldner, **Etym(bi)ology**.  
Omnidawn Publishing, 2002.

John Yau, **Borrowed Love Poems**.  
Penguin Poets, 2002.

## MAGAZINES

**Cello Entry Five**. Editor: Rick Snyder.  
Contributors: Jennifer Moxley, Dale  
Smith, Rosmarie Waldrop, others.

**Combo #9**. Editor: Michael Magee.  
Contributors: E. Tracy Grinnel, Ray di  
Palma, Vincent Katz, others.  
Interview with Carla Harryman.

**Conduit Number 11**. Editor: William  
Waltz. Contributors: Claudia Keelan,  
Will Lavender, Eleni Sikelianos, oth-  
ers.

**ixnay number seven**. Editors: Chris  
McCreary and Jenn McCreary.  
Contributors: Brandon Downing,  
Carol Mirakove, Elizabeth Robinson,  
others.

**Nerter No. 1**. Editor: Manuel Brito  
(Apdo 167, La Laguna, Tenerife, Islas  
Canarias. Contributors: Steve  
Benson, Carla Harryman, Lyn  
Hejinian, Susan Howe, Jackson Mac  
Low, Bernadette Mayer, Jerome  
Rothernberg, Leslie Scalapino, oth-  
ers. (Spanish-language journal, this  
issue devoted to contemporary  
American poetics in translation.)

**Two Lines: A Journal of Translation**.  
Editor and Publisher: Olivia E. Sears.  
Translations of Kazuko Shiraishi,  
Cesare Pavese, Faiz Ahmed Faiz, oth-  
ers.

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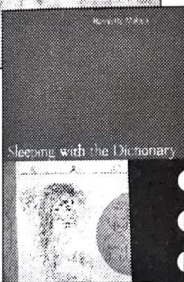
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