

THE POETRY PROJECT NEWSLETTER

\$5.00

ISSUE NUMBER 199 APRIL/MAY 2004



THE PROSE ISSUE

HARRY MATHEWS

RENEE GLADMAN

PATTIE MCCARTHY



New Books from Hanging Loose Press

Mark Pawlak, ed.

Present/Tense: Poets in the World

A major gathering of poets taking hard looks at where we are and where we're going—

Adrienne Rich, Sherman Alexie, Jayne Cortez, Martín Espada, Quincy Troupe, Kimiko Hahn, Anselm Hollo, Jack Agüeros, Donna Brook, Joy Harjo, and other heavy hitters.

Paper, \$16. Hardcover, \$26.

Stephen Beal

**Suddenly Speaking
Babylonian**

"Joyous and compelling...an extremely refreshing book" – William Jay Smith. "Zany, glittering narratives...These poems resonate with our deepest feelings" – Edward Field. "Hilarious" – Mary Crow.

Paper, \$14. Hardcover, \$24.

Jacqueline Lyons

**The Way They Say Yes
Here**

"One of the most memorable accounts of an American's experience in an African country." – Paul Violi. "A pure accuracy of gaze in an essential, necessary poetry. Her compassion and understanding are exemplary—and deeply moving."—Laura Mullen

Paper, \$14. Hardcover, \$24.

Arnold Mesches

The FBI Files

HL's first art book and an extraordinary one. Renowned painter Mesches called for his FBI file and turned many of the pages into vibrant art. The exhibit opened to great acclaim at New York's PS 1 and is now touring the country. The book contains 56 full-color reproductions in an oversized format.

Paper, \$30.

**Rafael Pérez Estrada
translated by Steven Stewart**
Devoured by the Moon

First English translation of the poems by this Spanish surrealist, presented *en face*.

"Pleasurable and inventive... These poems are as durable as granite." – David Kirby.

Paper, \$14. Hardcover, \$25.

**Rosamond S. King,
Charles Russell, Marie
Carter, Robert Hershon,
eds.**

Voices of the City

"Poems as a window onto an urban landscape." The ups and downs of city living captured by Harvey Shapiro, Paul Violi, Joanna Fuhrman, Tony Towle, Chuck Wachtel, Eula Biss, Maggie Nelson, Hettie Jones, Dick Lourie, Mary Bonina, many more.

Paper, \$14

Terence Winch

**That Special Place: New
World Irish Stories**

The poet and musician recalls the good times of making traditional music with the band Celtic Thunder. Winch "has a voice unique and memorable to which we do well to attend...delivers both respect and irreverence with utterly convincing authority" – Charles Fanning

Paper, \$14. Hardcover, \$24.

Pansy Maurer-Alvarez

**When the Body Says It's
Leaving**

"A rich book, a book of hours for those lucky enough to obtain it" – Harvey Shapiro. "Intelligent and passionate poetry...a wonderful book that will change the reader to the bone" – Elinor Nauen.

"Delighting" – Kimiko Hahn.

Paper, \$14. Hardcover, \$24.

And keep in mind....

Sherman Alexie, *The Business of Fancydancing: The Screenplay*, paper \$16, cloth \$24. **Marie Carter, ed.**, *Word Jig: New Fiction from Scotland*, paper \$16, cloth \$26. **Hettie Jones**, *All Told*, paper \$14, cloth \$22. **Joanna Fuhrman**, *Ugh Ugh Ocean*, paper \$13, cloth \$21. **Maggie Nelson**, *The Latest Winter*, paper \$13, cloth \$21. **Mark Pawlak, Dick Lourie, Robert Hershon & Ron Schreiber, eds.**, *Shooting the Rat: Outstanding Poems and Stories by High School Writers*, paper \$16, cloth \$26.

Order from: Hanging Loose Press, 231
Wyckoff St., Brooklyn, NY 11217.
Enclose check or money order. Include
\$3 postage for first two books,
\$1 for each added title.

NEWSLETTER EDITOR Marcella Durand
DESIGN Alberta Testanero

DISTRIBUTION Desert Moon Periodicals, 1226 Calle de Comercio, Santa Fe, NM 87505 • Small Press Distribution, 1341 Seventh St., Berkeley, CA 94710

THE POETRY PROJECT LTD. STAFF

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR Anselm Berrigan
PROGRAM COORDINATOR Miles Champion
PROGRAM ASSISTANT Corina Copp
MONDAY NIGHT COORDINATOR Maggie Nelson
MONDAY NIGHT TALK SERIES COORDINATOR Prageeta Sharma
FRIDAY NIGHT COORDINATOR Regie Cabico
SOUND TECHNICIAN David Vogen
BROADCAST CONSULTANT John Fisk
BOX OFFICE Valerie Deus, Erica Kaufman, Mike Marcinkowski, Joanna Sondheim
INTERNS Elizabeth Antle, Makayla Bersing, Mohamed Kofuma, Maren Vespia, Sally Whiting
VOLUNTEERS Colomba Johnson, Debrah Morkun, Lauren Russell, Joy Surlis, Erica Weitzman

THE POETRY PROJECT NEWSLETTER is published four times a year and mailed free of charge to members of and contributors to the Poetry Project. Subscriptions are available for \$25/year domestic, \$35/year international. Checks should be made payable to The Poetry Project, St. Mark's Church, 131 East 10th St., NYC, NY 10003. For more information call (212) 674-0910, or e-mail info@poetryproject.com.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS Dianne Benson, Rosemary Carroll, Ted Greenwald, Steve Hamilton, Siri Hustedt, Greg Masters, Gillian McCain, Elinor Nauen, Paul Slovak, Vicki Hudspith, Edwin Torres, Hal Willner, and John Yau.

FRIENDS COMMITTEE Brooke Alexander, Susan Davis, Steve Dennin, Renée Fotouhi, Raymond Foye, Michael Friedman, Yvonne Jacqueline, Michel de Konkoly Thege, Peter Pennoyer, Jessica Reighard, Kimberly Vernardos, and Alexander Wood.

FUNDERS The Aeroflex Foundation; the Axe-Houghton Foundation; Brooke Alexander Gallery/Brooke Alexander Editions; Farrar, Straus and Giroux; the Foundation for Contemporary Performance Arts, Inc.; Edge Books; Granary Books; The Greenwall Foundation; The Heyday Foundation; Irwin, Lewin, Cohn & Lewis; the Laura (Riding) Jackson Board of Literary Management; The Jerome Foundation; Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.; the Lila Acheson Wallace Theater Fund, established in Community Funds by the co-founder of The Reader's Digest Association; Nenaker & Herrmann; Penguin; Scribner; The Winslow Family Foundation; Anonymous Foundations and Corporations; Russell Banks; Dianne Benson; Mary Rose Brusewitz; Rosemary Carroll; Willem Dafoe; Georgia & Bill Delano; Anne Delaney & Steve Staso; Renée Fotouhi & Henry Scholder; Agnes Gund & Daniel Shapiro; Ada & Alex Katz; Kazuko.com; Michel de Konkoly Thege; Vicki Hudspith & Wallace Turbeville; Jonathan Lasker; Mark McCain; Deborah Berg McCarthy & Michael McCarthy; Jerome & Diane Rothenberg; Elena Prentice & Summer Rulon-Miller; Jeannette Sanger; Hank O'Neal & Shelley Shier; Simon Schuchat; Andre Spears; Peter & Susan Straub; Joan Wilentz; Karrie & Trevor Wright; members of the Poetry Project; and other individual contributors.

The Poetry Project's programs and publications are made possible, in part, with public funds from: the National Endowment for the Arts; the New York State Council on the Arts; the City of New York's Department of Cultural Affairs; and the Materials for the Arts/New York City Department of Cultural Affairs and Department of Sanitation.

COPYRIGHT 2004 POETRY PROJECT
ALL RIGHTS REVERT TO AUTHORS UPON PUBLICATION.
WWW.POETRYPROJECT.COM



NYSCA
New York State Council on the Arts

4 ANNOUNCEMENTS

Silent Auction to Benefit Poetry Project on 4/17, Pedro Pietri.

6 READING REPORTS

Small Press Conference, Belladonna*.

9 POEM

"cloister: 'or like place to walke in'" by Pattie McCarthy.

11 ESSAY

"The Person in the World," by Renee Gladman.

13 INTERVIEW

Harry Mathews: The Inside Story.

16 EVENTS CALENDAR

19 POEM

Harry Mathews, "Daniel and Della."

20 BOOK REVIEWS

Mark Morris, John Ashbery, Jo Ann Wasserman, Eleni Sikelianos, Merrill Gilfillan, Kristin Prevallet, and much more.

30 BOOKS RECEIVED

Including Tiny Presses.

32 JOIN NOW

COVER AND INSIDE ART:

Karoline Schleh: "Headdress," drawing and collage, 2003, and "Pharmacy," drawing and collage, 2003.

SILENT AUCTION AT THE POETRY PROJECT 4/17

Dear Readers,

The Poetry Project will be holding a silent auction on Saturday, April 17 from 3-7 pm. This event will function as both a fundraiser and a community-wide spring party. There will be performances, refreshments, a book table, raffles, and various other assorted entities for sale and perusal that afternoon. The auction will take place in both the Sanctuary and the Parish Hall, and if the weather cooperates, we'll open up the back garden of the church as well.

The idea here is to have a fundraiser which is non-exclusive; i.e. anyone might be able to come and come away with one or several of the books, broadsides, magazines, prints, drawings, collages, manuscript pages, and other ephemera available (a backstage pass to an episode of Saturday Night Live, say). The environment will be casual and friendly, and we hope that many of you can make it. We've received a generous array of donated items from many artists, writers, and Poetry Project community members, and our intention is to auction them off to raise funds for the 2004-2005 programming season and offset the NEA cuts. The Poetry Project will be absorbing during that time.

As we go to press we have a lengthy list of items for auction, several of which follow this note. We are still expecting a number of other items, so please check the Announcements page at the Poetry Project website (www.poetryproject.com) for regular updates of our catalog. You should also feel free to call or e-mail us at the office for more information. There will be a range of minimum bids—from \$3 to \$2500—and there will be a good number of affordable items from both the literary and artistic sides of the auction. Performances, by the way, will be given by Edwin Torres, Brenda Coultas, Edmund Berrigan, and Thurston Moore. We will be accepting payments via cash, check and credit card.

I hope to see you on April 17, if not sooner.

Best wishes,

Anselm Berrigan

Among the Items for Auction:

Alexie, Sherman. *The Business of Fancy Dancing.* Hanging Loose, 2003, signed.

Allen, Jonathan. "Bombs Away (study)." Painting, 2002, signed on back.

Angel Hair 6. Spring 1969, cover by George Schneeman.

Auster, Paul. *New York.* Signed limited edition. Henry Holt and Co., 1997.

Bee, Susan. Framed drawing with watercol-

or, gouache, ink and collage, 2001, signed.

Berrigan, Ted with Schneeman, George. "A Brautigan." Drawing/Text/Ink. Signed by both, 1971.

Brainard, Joe. *More I Remember,* Angel Hair Books, 1972, 1st ed.

Broadway: A Poets and Painters Anthology and Broadway 2. Edited by James Schuyler and Charles North.

Burckhardt, Rudy. Collage, mixed media, 1992, framed and signed.

Clark, Emilie. Five watercolor, ink and graphite works on paper. One mixed media on canvas.

Clark, Jeff. Signed broadside.

Clemente, Francesco. print: #6/15, signed. Gray/Charcoal figures.

Cohen, Nancy with Torres, Edwin. "Scorns of Slings in my Slip." Wax and paper drawing.

Coolidge, Clark. 15 signed publications.

Coultas, Brenda. Signed broadside.

Corbett, William. Handwritten and signed letter from **Philip Guston**, 5/25/76.

Corso, Gregory. Two signed broadsides.

Dubris, Maggie. *Weep Not, My Wanton*, first edition, Black Sparrow Press, 2002; signed.

Durand, Marcella. Signed broadside.

Ferlinghetti, Lawrence. *Life Studies, Life Stories.* Art book. First edition; 2003; signed January 2004.

Foster, Tonya. Signed broadside.

Ginsberg, Allen. "New Stanzas for Amazing Grace." Broadside, Hanuman, 1994.

Hannah, Duncan with Dlugos, Tim. One lithograph collaboration, 1986, signed; two signed collages, one to Rudy Burckhardt.

Hell, Richard. Signed manuscript copy of just-completed novel *Godlike*.

Hollo, Anselm. 11 signed publications.

Johns, Jasper. Print: Figure 4 from *Figures*, 1975. Intaglio, edition of 100. Signed LR: J. Johns '75.

Katz, Alex. Woodcut: Black and Gold, 1998; *Edges* with **Creeley, Robert**, images by Katz, signed by both.

Kupferberg, Tuli. Three signed publications.

Larsen, David. "Indoor European." Collage, mixed media, 2004.

Luoma, Bill. "Somewhat." Signed broadside.

Mayer, Bernadette. *The Golden Book of Words*, cover by Joe Brainard, Angel Hair Books, 1978.

Mayer, Bernadette and Warsh, Lewis. *L'Amour Fou*, 1981, signed by both authors.

McCain, Gillian and McNeil, Legs. *Please Kill Me: The Uncensored Oral History of Punk.* Grove Press, 1996. Signed by many of the interviewees, and the authors. Dedication page signed by Danny Fields.

Michaux, Henri. *Les Grandes Épreuves de L'Esprit.* Le Point du Jour/Nouvelle Revue Française/Librarie Gallimard, France, 1966.

North, Charles. *New and Selected Poems, Sun & Moon*, 1999; signed.

Notley, Alice. "Carbon Frozen." Mixed media collage applied to Oriental fan, 1992; *Songs for the Unborn Second Baby*, United Artists, cover by G. Schneeman, 1979, 1st ed.

Orlovsky, Peter. *Clean Asshole Poems & Smiling Vegetable Songs.* Northern Lights edition, signed by Gregory Corso.

O'Russa, Richard. "Xul Solar III-IV." Gouache on paper, signed by artist.

Prevallet, Kristin. Signed broadside.

Punk Magazine. 1976. Patti Smith cover.

Reed, Lou. *The Raven*, Signed and numbered limited edition hardcover, 2003.

Saroyan, Aram. Signed poster of poem "Light," 1989, *Paris Review*.

Schneeman, George. 20 pieces, assorted media.

Sexton, Anne. *The Book of Folly*, special edition, Houghton Mifflin, 1972, signed.

Smith, Kiki. Untitled print, signed.

Smith, Patti. "ps/ alm 23 revisited." Broadside.

Sparrow. Two signed chapbooks.

Spicer, Jack and Herndon, Fran. *Golem*, Granary Books, 1999.

Straub, Peter. *Lost Boy Lost Girl.* Random House, first edition, 2003. Signed.

Toscano, Rodrigo. Signed broadside.

Towle, Tony. *The History of the Invitation: New and Selected Poems 1963-2000*, Hanging Loose, 2002. Signed.

Valery, Paul. *Album de Vers Anciens*, Gallimard/Éditions de la Nouvelle Revue Française, 1927.

Vicuña, Cecilia. "Sidewalk Forests," photograph of street installation, 1981.

Violi, Paul. *Waterworks*, 1972, signed.

Waldman, Anne and Rothenberg, Susan. *Kin*, Granary Books, 1997.

Warsh, Lewis. Three signed publications.

Yau, John. Signed broadside.

Zemborain, Lila. Signed broadside.

PEDRO PIETRI 1944-2004

So here is what it was like for me at the viewing of Pedro Pietri's body on March 7th at the People's Church on 111th Street and Lexington Avenue. The original "man in black," as one speaker called him, was laid out in coffin flowers—red and white were the dominant colors. The service was in Spanish; there's nothing like singing "Just As I Am" in English when everyone else is singing in Spanish. My friend Janet Goldner accompanied me to what felt like a journey to my youth and then a journey away from it. Bob Holman and his youngest daughter were there, and Steve Cannon and David Henderson and all of Pedro's living relatives, including his sister Carmen, who had watched him die during his trip back from Mexico.

Strange to think of him deep in the earth, but then Pedro was pretty earthy. At one point, a speaker said this is just like a Pietri production—the speaker goes out, flowers start falling, and there must have been about 10 babies (all grand-nieces and nephews, maybe) crying and laughing. In fact, there was a lot of laughter. At one point the women—Eve Packer, me, Sandy Esteves—had to hurl our-

selves into the very male space of the speechifying. Just after Felipe Luciano got up and told some truth and lied about some other stuff and before Rosie Perez tried to maintain her homegirl status, I looked once more at Pedro smiling his funeral smile and walked out into the sunlight. David Mills and a line of folks were waiting to enter, to pay their respects, to say *Vaya con dios*. The drummers could be heard to 116th Street.

One thing you got from the modest church, the minister's sweet regard, the families, families, and families, was that Pedro was a patriarch. Of his own blood relations, but also of a family of poets, playwrights, and misfits from around the planet. And since he was a benevolent patriarch, we are left with a sense of



PEDRO PIETRI, NEW YEAR'S DAY MARATHON, 1999
PHOTO CREDIT: GREG FUCHS

deep loss of a kind and generous and silly and prophetic and sexy man gone to the earth and tossing around the heavens. I trust the angels or devils are smiling.

Lots of love,

—Patricia Spears Jones (via e-mail)

Burning Deck Books

Gerhard Rühm

I MY FEET: POEMS AND CONSTELLATIONS

[Dichten =, No. 7; selected and translated from the German by Rosmarie Waldrop]

"Actionist word creator, anarchic alliterater, solid scholar and theoretician, composer, graphic artist, collagist, syllable-juggler, concrete poet, word sculptor, chronicler, and Trotskyite permanent revolutionary."—Ruth Rybarski, *Profil*
Poetry, 120 pp., offset, smyth-sewn, ISBN 1-886224-75-7 original paperback \$10

Pierre Alferi

OXO

[Serie d'écriture, No. 17; translated from the French by Cole Swensen]

A bouillon cube (literally), a conceptual cube (seven sections of seven poems, with each poem composed of seven lines of seven syllables) and at the same time an album of verbal snapshots of life in Paris in the late 20th century: its tourists, its homeless, its politicians, its TV news, its poetry, its pigeons. Alferi's tightly coiled syntax unravels each one like a puzzle that slowly accrues to a finely nuanced image.

Poetry, 88 pp., offset, smyth-sewn, ISBN 1-886224-66-8 original paperback \$10

Janet Kauffman

FIVE ON FICTION

Kauffman is redefining the terms of literature and of human nature. Here, short paragraphs cut across genres to assemble a poetics of narrative. She shows us plot as ground, and action as just what it looks like. *Five on Fiction* sets out the bones and flesh of narrative, in bits and pieces, evidence of its connections to the physical and natural world.

Fiction/Poetics, 64 pp., offset, smyth-sewn, ISBN 1-886224-73-0 original paperback \$10

PEGASUS DESCENDING: A BOOK OF THE BEST BAD VERSE

edited by James Camp, X. J. Kennedy, & Keith Waldrop

"Burning Deck has produced some sublimely beautiful books, but *Pegasus Descending* may be the most sublime of all. I can't stop reading it... What moves me about it is not only the howlers ("We saw her die—and she is dead") but the ones whose weirdness displays the earnestness of the intent. I mean, "bad poetry" is often great poetry that, because the emotion is real, tries too hard and falls over backwards. I'll probably get more use out of this anthology than a whole shelf of Nortons."—Michael Davidson

Anthology, 240 pages, offset, smyth-sewn, ISBN 1-886224-68-4, original paperback \$10

We thank the Goethe-Institut for translation support.

Orders: Small Press Distribution 1-800/869-7553, orders@spdbooks.org



READING REPORTS

THE PIRATES OF SMALL PRESS: THE ITHACA SMALL PRESS CULTURE WORKERS CONFERENCE

When sociological engineer Jane Sprague organized a conference on small press culture in Ithaca on February 7, nobody knew who would come or what they would hear. For the most part, showcasing individual projects took a back seat to examining what, collectively, small press publishers need to do now.

Joel Kuszai discussed the syndicate model in "The New Gangsterism: Poetry as Criminal Syndicate," suggesting we view ourselves as "poet gangsters ... outside of the law." Since the dominant economy works against creative ventures, our best shot at viability is to form alternate economic organizations. Later I was told that his talk had been tongue in cheek, not fist in air, and felt discouraged that what had seemed a compelling manifesto had really been a *fata morgana* exercise in ironic form.

Spahr, an editor of *Chain* and the Subpress Collective, delivered "Editing as the Migrations of Plovers, Monarchs, Whales, and Herds of Walking Animals." *Chain* had emerged in part as a response to the male-dominated discourse of Buffalo, NY, which poo-pooed women as not radical enough and as too "gender specific." Creating a journal to take those notions down and develop new ones in their stead was a better option than the initial response: kvetching in bars. She then discussed Subpress, a cooperative publishing outfit whose members, syndicate-style, had agreed to donate one percent of their annual income to the enterprise.

The second panel opened with Jen Coleman's and Allison Cobb's report, "How I Stopped Worrying and Learned To Love the POM." POM, short for Product of Many, publishes poems written in response to poems published in earlier issues, creating an ever more dense hermeneutic thicket. Insodoing, they create micro-lineages and instant traditions. Jonathan Skinner then served up "Editing Ecopoetics." The academic-sounding title of the journal, with its implications of old-growth essays on the semiotics of forest floors, is cleverly designed to get institutions and people to subscribe and then, on reading the work that's actually there, to be entirely flummoxed.

I then delivered an accelerated version of the editorial in the new issue of *LUNGFULL!* magazine, "13: Bad Luck & Trouble." I discussed the origins of the number 13 and moved on to the nature of fear itself—who decides what we are afraid of and what they get out of it. I hoped to reveal that the current state of the world has a distinct origin, before Bush ever sunk his talons in us.

Jennifer Savran began the bookmaker's panel with "The Political Art of the Book." She founded LunaSea Bindery and Press because she wanted to "push the relationship between emotion and politics." The press focuses on women's issues and donates its proceeds to organizations that help women in need.

Charles Alexander, editor of Chax Editions, presented a show-and-tell of fascinating book-objects and a talk called, "VISIONS OF THE BOOK: Practical Magic." Alexander looks at Chax books as providing a unique opportunity to sneak past people's filters. "Books are the Trojan horse of art" because their familiarity "makes a place to enter."

Some highlights of the readings by participants:

Cobb entered the vortex of language as urban byproduct, reading a series of poems based on scraps of speech heard 'round Brooklyn. Outdoorsman Skinner's poems were "the individual stationary in the blast of current events," as sent through the filter of ecological com-

prehension. Spahr explained that "poetry helps us think things through ... It's not my theory but it's a good theory" and then read "an attempt to speak away" the horrors of what humans insist on doing to each other.

Buffalo's Mike Kelleher was hilarious and erudite, with collisions of languages, "Ensuite je drove to Ithaca." At times the work was ironic play, and at times he converted his language, through tiny explosions of breath, into terribly serious and luminous work.

Then I read and for a moment we all connected and transformed, each one of us, into radiant loci for the sum total of all consciousness. Even I needed another drink after those 10 minutes.

Coleman wrapped impossible ideas around misunderstandings and a new kind of learning from the nostalgia of the infinite. Michael Cross closed with a barrage of rapid-fire phrases. Did he really say "My conqueror is a debutante through and through?"

Sprague testified about her experiences teaching in jail and how she, raised in a poverty where books were ornamental at best and in a family where people of other races were considered semihuman, could easily have ended up in prison herself. Most of our tenuous existence is sustained not by what we do for ourselves, but what others make available to us and, in turn, what we are able to provide. We live in the economic cracks, but for many, those cracks are becoming trenches. Underfunded and unaffiliated, a confederacy of like-minded people are out to make poems, to usher them into the world and so make it better. Make it better? Faced with the alternatives, we'd better.

—Brendan Lorber

BELLADONNA* READING/CHAPBOOK SERIES

On Friday 2/6, I scrambled over to Bluestockings Bookstore to catch Nada Gordon, Catherine Daly, and Caroline Bergvall at the Belladonna* Reading/Chapbook Series curated by Rachel Levitsky and Erica Kaufman. There was something inspired and brilliant about the international, tri-coastal flavor of the reading—Gordon from NY, Daly from LA, and Bergvall, who teaches at Dartington College of Arts in England—not to mention the juxtaposition of three writers with extremely diverse but well-articulated visions of their respective projects. Gordon started off the evening (for the local team). I appreciated how her reading spanned experimental pieces to quietly complex lyrics, mixed with sung poems that interrupted the standard reading format like some sort of post-post-camp musical. And Nada's rich cabaret-esque vocal style was perfectly matched to the intimate venue.

Daly read her work in a far different manner. Methodically (almost harpsichord-like), she read selectively through her Belladonna* chapbook text—leaving out words, circling back, creating combinations—which returned me to a more meditative, internal space and evoked Jackson Mac Low reading his "open-ended performance texts."

Lastly, Bergvall (whose work takes on extraordinary dimensions when she reads it) gave one of the most memorable text/sound performances, at least in my modern memory—including a recent writing project involving three continuous days riding the London tube system. Her performance, with traces of Schwitters-like sound warping of individual letter sounds, utilizes "bilingually sourced performances" of French and English to achieve a kind of surfing of the inferred. But it was the urgency of the thread, or threat, of meaning underneath that linguistic static that kept me riveted to the edge of my chair.

—Dan Machlin

summer writing program 2004

June 7 - July 4

WEEK 1: June 7 - June 13

*Borders - Literary, Ethical,
Geographical & Personal*

Faculty include Lorenzo Thomas,
Nicole Brossard, Harryette Mullen,
Eleni Sikelianos, Thalia Field, Brian
Evenson, Thomas Glave, Rudy Rucker

WEEK 2: June 14 - June 20

Political Activism & Writing

Faculty include Sonia Sanchez, Anne
Waldman, Eileen Myles, Ammiel Alcalay,
Bob Holman, Laird Hunt, Kristin
Prevallet, and Peter and Donna Thomas

WEEK 3: June 21 - June 27

*Translation & Intercultural
Literary Arts*

Faculty include Robin Blaser, Alice Notley,
Samuel R. Delany, Sam Hamill, Anselm
Hollo, Rebecca Brown, Anselm Berrigan

WEEK 4: June 28 - July 4

Performance & Collaboration

Faculty include Joanne Kyger, Lisa Jarnot,
Wang Ping, Ken Mikolowski, Bobbie
Louise Hawkins

Four Week Program

Available for academic credit & non-credit

1.5 undergraduate credits per week

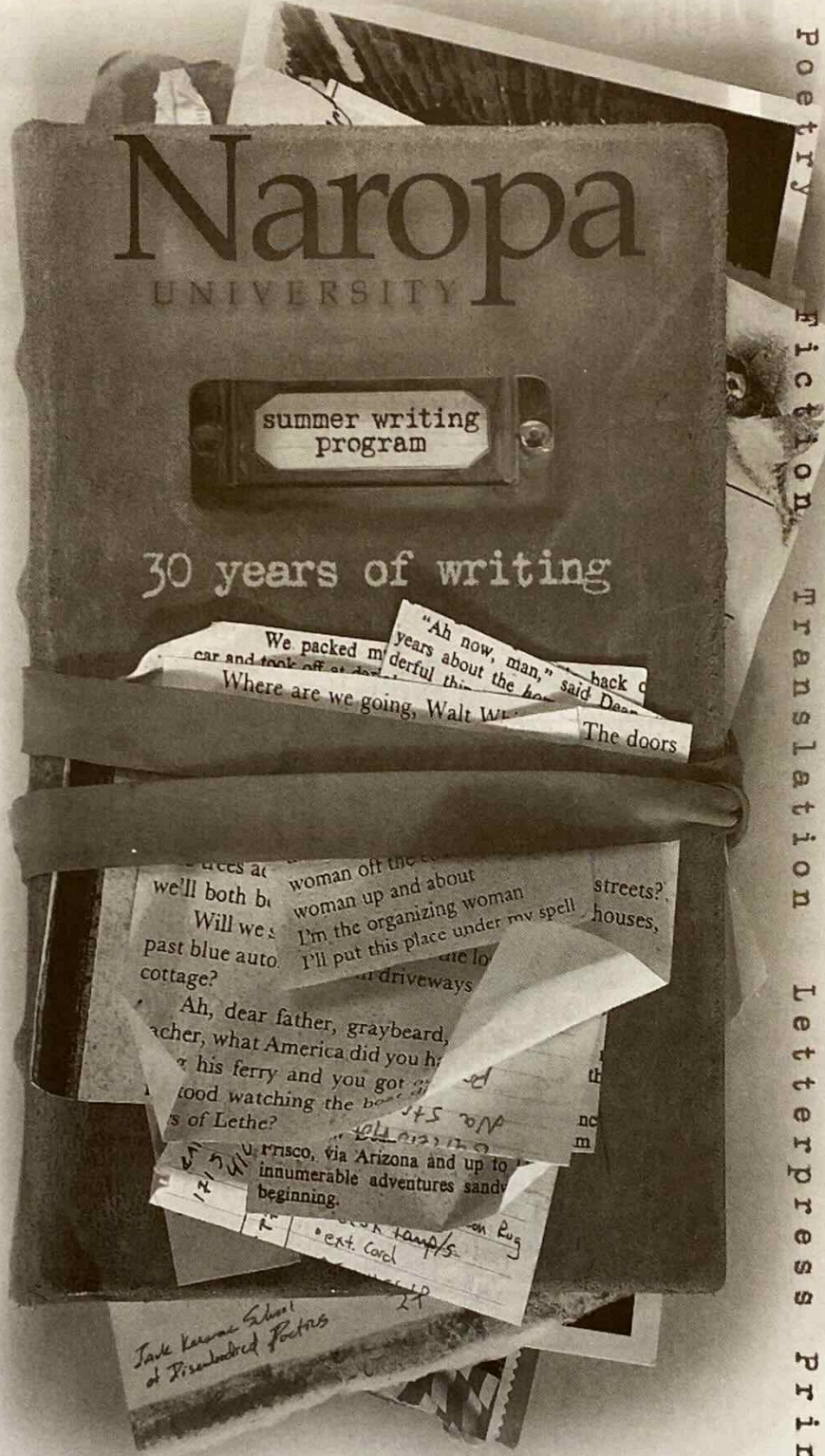
2 graduate credits per week

To receive our summer catalog
please contact Lisa Birman

(303) 245-4600

swpr@naropa.edu

www.naropa.edu/swp



Poetry
Fiction
Translation
Letterpress
Printing



The Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics

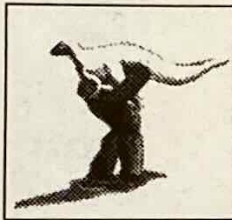
Naropa University 2130 Arapahoe Ave., Boulder, CO 80302 (303) 546-3572 (800) 772-6951
NCA accredited, BA, MA, MFA degrees



**PAINTER AMONG POETS:
THE COLLABORATIVE ART OF GEORGE SCHNEEMAN**
EDITED BY RON PADGETT

ISBN: 1-887123-66-0
Price: \$29.95

Painter among Poets: The Collaborative Art of George Schneeman is the first retrospective presentation of the wide range of art works that Schneeman has created with poets over the past thirty-five years. The book includes an essay by Carter Ratcliff, an extensive conversation between Schneeman and Ron Padgett, and a bibliography. Beautifully illustrated with sixty-seven color reproductions and twenty-three in black-and-white.



PLAYING BODIES
BOB PERELMAN & FRANCIE SHAW

ISBN: 1-887123-64-4
Price: \$29.95

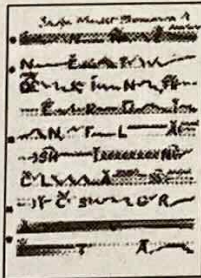
This artists book is a series of fifty-two paintings by Shaw and fifty-two poems by Perelman reflecting an intensely united collaboration.



THE NEW SOCIETY FOR UNIVERSAL HARMONY
LENORE MALEN

ISBN: 1-887123-67-9

The New Society for Universal Harmony comes out of a multi-media installation that reinvents an 18th-century utopian healing clinic known as the Société de l'harmonie universelle. Malen's work expresses our culture's search for a "cure" through darkly funny testimonials and photographs.



DOINGS: ASSORTED PERFORMANCE PIECES 1955-2002
JACKSON MAC LOW

ISBN: 1-887123-62-8
Price: \$50.00

Termed "America's most indefatigable experimental poet" by *Publishers Weekly*, Mac Low has long been considered a master innovator. This volume brings together a comprehensive collection of Mac Low's scores written over the past 40 years, complete with their performance instructions, providing a superb overview of these remarkable and curious compositions.

FORTHCOMING LIMITED EDITIONS

Erosion's Pull by Maureen Owen & Yvonne Jacquette

The Lake by Lyn Hejinian & Emilie Clark

Visit our website for more information on the above titles: www.granarybooks.com

CLOISTER : "OR LIKE PLACE TO WALK IN"

Pattie McCarthy

his face, once silvered, is illegible.

[also to blur or daube with inke]

there is an unexpected restraint, even a courtly
elegance in an unexpected & orderly system of gestures
or orderly sequence of gestures, of figures well-behaved

(permission to reproduce images from this
facsimile was not forthcoming)

& encloistered [environed with pillars] & silvered.

bookhand. the first missing image : someone

must have known it was worth something to dismember
the manuscript

(condition of leaf less

than fine [F-] due to some

devotional wear— some fingering stain—
in bottom right corner)

: he draws the fabric up to his cheek in a mourning gesture
usually reserved for women, for one woman whose entire
oeuvre of gestures is a language of mourning. both noun
& verb— hours shallow or hollow in the week between,
the empty map space, the dragons in the margins [a place
to passe from one place to another]

translated into a more human

form of desire, the apparatus of weft,

warp, accumulation, repetition,

counter-point. awkward,

muscular weather. awkward, disorderly

attempts at lemmatization

(some minor smudging on verso (see))

a familiar famine. proscriptive or descriptive,

a decision had to be made : the difference between

'historic' & 'historical'

a matter of importance

(see usage notes)—

inappropriately, the roulette table at the children's charity faux-casino was called

: catherine's wheel

(without a hint of recognition, a most inaccessible expression).

CLOISTER : "OR LIKE PLACE TO WALK IN"

in his miniscule bookhand (the fine
details of his fingers & elbows) : the marks
may be letters, the remnants of inscription
or, simpler, practice strokes— whereas
there is very little room in the collective imagination for ruins.
an uncomfortable & small sky
cluttered with birds of many kinds & drops of many sizes
as the edges of the weather reach us

[spring was coming, he took careful note
that spring was coming, which made him
highly elated, as if it were his own doing,
as if he were responsible for spring].

were I the betting kind : of the 4 men engaged in doing violence to each other,
I'd put money on the one with a machete— although while he is entangled
with the second (big stick) and third (spear) men, the fourth man (large rock)
has climbed onto something unseen behind the rest— the rock aloft over machete
man's head. the man with the rock
doesn't look like a professional.
another missing image : from the surrounding
text & similar manuscripts, we can assume

[also to shut, to locke, to close, to make
fast, to pen up, to coope up, to inclose]
to be enclosed & to walk in that
limitation wearing his most remote expression
—silvered, circumflex—
illegible & solitary in company, not
necessarily silent

(see spaltklang)—
his face, with a cross-section
anthill perspective on the disaster— his face, regardless
of subject matter, reveals nothing,
whatever bodies or buildings
broken or broken earth
he walks in an orderly manner
do not harm the earth & [text missing])
not urgent, in or over
crowded rubble— there is no echo of violence in his face
(in drollery & tendrils, sticking out their tongues).

*Pattie McCarthy is the author of bk of (h)rs
(2002) and Verso (forthcoming 2004), both
from Apogee Press.*

THE PERSON IN THE WORLD

by Renee Gladman

Today I find, in the field of our thoughts, in thinking of existence (being-existing) in time and space, we have the most absolute of mirrors: the sentence.¹ Subject phrases, predicates, dependent and independent clauses, adverbs, prepositions, verb tenses, even punctuation—all create intervals (or delays, derailments) of how the person functions in the world. It is as though all the possibilities of one's performances in time, the potential of these performances coming in and out of existence, is already graphed onto this most basic plane of speech. With a "community of sentences"² one can build a philosophy of experience, an architecture of reflection and flight. That is, if one is poised to do so. I am trying to talk about the prose writer, writer of prose.

For the purpose of this essay, I want to focus on the development of a philosophy of experience in the realm of events (things happening or failing to happen). And thus, to think of narrative. But not the strict narrative of fiction, for fiction is too burdened by a system of expectations (e.g. entrenched characters, well-developed story lines, conflicts, and resolutions) to allow for the wandering and sometimes stuttering "I" that I associate with discovery. This "I," not necessarily autobiographical, is a manifestation of the act of thinking in language, of the difficulties that arise, the fractures that form. This "I" undermines a tendency of conventional fiction to present a realism that is as faithful as it is complete and confident, a realism that has little use for the materials of its own construction. The "realm of events" or narratives that I think of as I write this are not static; they are full of becoming, full of questions of becoming. Such wonder is demonstrated in Gail Scott's novel *Heroine* (Coach House, 1987), when the narrator confides: "Each time I start, it's as if the memory of the past (the noun, the sentence's beginning) wipes out the present (verb). So I can no longer move forward in the words." What a sentence like this does in a novel so preoccupied with the process of what remains/what is possible of a past that, from the vantage point of the writer, is completely drenched, exaggerated, diminished, or even clarified by the present and future, is create a bridge. The bridge connects desire (to move, to articulate) to its object (destination, meaning). The sentence (bridge) interrogates as it performs; it fails as it performs. A work replete of such sentences ultimately asks more questions than it can answer; it gives up authority for wonder, it gives up completion for process.

To borrow from Jono Schneider's *But I Could Not Speak*, such "loss of control yielded a variety of meaning that I have not yet been determined by although I'm being written out in it."³ The "being written out in," an event of the text among other events—such that writing itself becomes a character—is a necessary component to my current conception of prose.

Prose (to risk a definition) is the registering of the everyday, the phenomenon of life (of being-in-life) using a kind of heightened language (thus, a heightened consciousness of oneself in language), alongside a materialization of that activity in the form of characters (splinters) and events (narrative). Prose moves across genres, practices of thought, cultures, realities, bringing to both the writer and reader's attention the blurred, yet visible borders between them.

The crossing of genres, as with the crossing of a sentence, or a city (with its many divisions, disparities), leads me to think of the infinitive to reach—the always-failing to arrive, the never-intending to arrive—and also, the question of return. Bhanu Kapil-Rider spoke of this "crossing" on a panel last summer at Naropa University: "I'm interested in these failed movements, full of longing, as gestures or failures of the narrative, but also as the language that arises at the points where

flows are deflected. What happens when the person, jarred in repetition at the border, begins to speak?"

I did not set out to describe the project of prose—for the interim of this writing, anyway—as so legibly shaped by or in response to trauma, which the above seems to indicate. But if I do allow this impression to stand, I want to clarify that it is not psychological trauma that I am referring to here (though I am not excluding it either). What I am thinking of is a kind of semantic trauma. That is, if one found—as one opened to write—a break or a freezing or a sudden displacement of meaning, of meaning as an accumulation of acts or thoughts, how might this impact the nature and content of one's sentences, of sentence-building? "The task of philosophy," to quote Brian Massumi, "is to reattach statements to their conditions of emergence."⁴ I would say the task of prose is to explore the habitability of those conditions.

To compile a list of "the prose writers" strikes me as a mostly impossible task; the work is simply too varied and always-becoming-other-things to be held or fixed. Also, it is too occasional. There are few writers (that I have found) who have actually made prose their living, their mode of expression, such that an accumulation of prose texts, or any kind of discourse engaging, and thereby, tracking what prose is, occurs at an incredibly slow pace. The bright side is that this elusive genre maintains a roving quality, thus is freer, more open to discovery. The less positive side is that the work happens in near isolation. A conference of ideas, as one might find in most poetry journals or reading series, has been wanting—within the field of experimental prose or narrative—for most of my writing career (which, admittedly, is only about 10 years).⁵

However, the fact that I have written several of these statements over the last two years interrogating my idea of prose; the fact of the Narrativity Web site at San Francisco State University (<http://www.sfsu.edu/~poetry/narrativity/>); the fact that the editors of that site ask their contributors to attach process notes to their work; and the fact of a few other simultaneous conversations, publications, and endeavors (that I do not have the space to name)—all indicate that, today, the marks made toward an identity of prose are being gathered quicker than they are being erased.

Renee Gladman is the author of *Juice* (Kelsey St. Press, 2000), *The Activist* (Krupskaya, 2003) and *Newcomer Can't Swim* (forthcoming, 2005). She is the editor and publisher of *Leroy*, a chapbook series, and *Leon Works*, a perfect-bound press for experimental prose. She lives in New York City.

¹ Unfortunately, I can refer only to the English sentence in this meditation, as it is the only shared language that I know fluently. Please see my memoir of growing up in the United States, *And All I Got Was Love Handles and Monolingualism*, for details.

² Gail Scott. "Bottoms Up," *Spare Parts Plus Two*, Coach House, 2001, p. 87. Scott writes: "I am thinking of the gap of the unspeakable ... I am thinking about the portentousness of sentencing ... I am thinking that a sentence in a community of sentences (paragraphs) somehow leaving impression of consciously reaching out in communicative gesture."

³ Jono Schneider's 2002 debut from O Books is a work of prose that employs continuous-renewing (re-starts) of a narrative situation to get at what fails in representation, and how representation, in its failure, ricochets between people.

⁴ I found this quote in the notes of an astounding book that I recommend to all readers of this essay: *Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space* by Elizabeth Grosz, published by MIT Press in 2001. Grosz quotes from Massumi's *A User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Deviations from Deleuze and Guattari*, published by MIT Press in 1995.

⁵ Not to be confused with experimental fiction, which has been well-attended to by Center for Book Culture's Dalkey Archive Press, *Review of Contemporary Fiction and the more modest Context*, which attempt to recast modernist and early avant-garde texts in a new light of aesthetic intention and community. Meanwhile, presses like Fiction Collective 2 (FC2), Coach House, Gutter Press, Sun and Moon, as well as a few others, are advancing this conversation among more contemporary writers.

SALT TITLES ARE NOW AVAILABLE FROM SMALL PRESS DISTRIBUTION

HIGH SALT INTAKE

POETRY
DRAMA
FICTION

CRITICISM
BIOGRAPHY
CLASSICS

ORDERS: 1-800-869-7553
ORDERS@SPDBOOKS.ORG
FAX: 1-510-524-0852
WWW.SPDBOOKS.ORG
PUBNET (SAN #106-6617)



BERNSTEIN
BRADY
CHERNOFF
DALY
DOERR
GLAZIER

GRACE
HARP
HEALY
HELLER
HENRY
HOOVER

JAEGER
JARNOT
KINSELLA
LAZER
LOPEZ
MCCOLLOUGH

MILNE
MONK
MOXLEY
O'BRIEN
OLIVER
PAQUIN

REISS
SCHULTZ
SILLIMAN
TRANTER
WHEELER
WILKINSON

HARRY MATHEWS

Reveals the *Inside Story*

TO MARCELLA DURAND

It has been known to be said a few times in the dark corners of the literary world that writers of fiction and writers of poetry don't always see eye to eye. While we're not sure if these differences have ever driven the two to West Side Story-like rumbles, the chasm between them has only been crossed by a few singular writers. One such intrepid soul is Harry Mathews, whom, if every poet has not read, then every poet should read immediately after reading this interview. In his utterly un-put-downable books, a single word may appear to carry the entire intricate weight of the novel (think of the word "Tlooth" in *Tlooth*) and below the ostensible "plot" are a thousand other plots, moving through chapters like underground rivers filled with ornate stalagmites and secret veins of ores. In Mathews's works the pleasure of *wondering* what it all means is infinitely more pleasurable than actually *knowing* what it all means. Mathews, the sole American member of Oulipo (the *Ouvroir de Littérature POtentielle*/Workshop for Potential Literature), has recently published a book of essays, *The Case of the Persevering Maltese* and a book of stories, *The Human Country: New and Collected Stories* (both from Dalkey Archive). His novels include *Tlooth*, *The Conversions*, *Cigarettes*, and *The Journalist*, while his books of poetry include *Armenian Papers: Poems 1954-1984* and *Selected Declarations of Dependence*.

Harry Mathews: I have to tell you that I'm very skeptical about the value of writers talking about writing.

Marcella Durand: Why?

HM: I've listened to so many who would've done better staying home and writing. Including me.

MD: One thing that's interesting about interviews with writers is hearing what they're reading, since most read independent of schools or assignments ...

HM: True enough. Obviously some interviews are worthwhile. It's panel discussions that really get me down.

MD: You've said that the Locus Solus group was one of the most important literary environments in your early history.

HM: Absolutely. In the late '50s I was an innocent—I knew practically no one who was an active writer and my own age. At the age of 23 I'd started writing poetry again (my passion all through adolescence, but it had died at college), thanks to my wife Niki de St. Phalle, who'd just given up an acting career for painting. Her example inspired me, and I never looked back. But only after I met John Ashbery in Paris in 1956 did I feel connected. John had a fantastic effect on me—not only through his work, but through his attitude towards writing, one that I'd never imagined.

MD: How did you meet him?

HM: Through a mutual friend, Walter Auerbach, whom we'd met in Mallorca. He'd known John and his friends in New York. In the spring of '56 John was in France on a Fulbright, and one afternoon at a café on the Luxembourg Gardens, Walter arranged a meeting. Friendship ensued at once.

MD: Did John ever give you specific advice about writing poetry?

HM: You know how he is—he never talks seriously about poetry. He'd rather be allusive and elusive and witty about it. When we met, he told me about French poets that I might be interested in reading.

MD: Who were some of those poets?

HM: Wait. What's more interesting is that I didn't read them right away (I have read them all since). Just by telling me about them, John somehow managed to cut me loose. Before that, my knowledge of contemporary poetry was very much what I read in *Poetry* magazine.

MD: Dreadful.

HM: No, not dreadful. The '50s were the time of rather precious, well-fashioned personal lyrics. I thought that was the way poetry was supposed to be. My only other inspirations were Pound and Eliot (I didn't much take to Auden or, for some reason, Wallace Stevens). I had discovered Laura Riding—in Mallorca I'd become friends with Robert Graves and gotten interested in his life. However, even reading Laura Riding hadn't

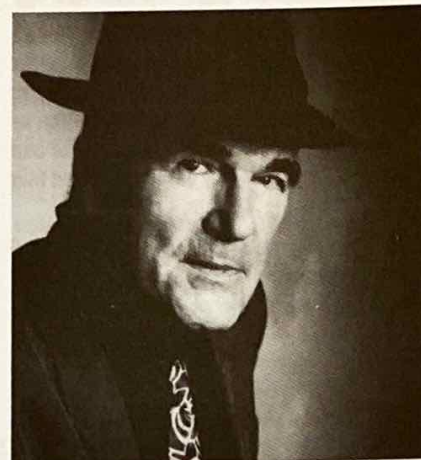


PHOTO CREDIT: SIGRID ESTRADA

lifted me out of my self-imposed rut. I realized in talking to John—I don't know how he communicated it to me, but he did: there's no rule about the way poetry should be. He never *said* that, but he let me know I could do anything I wanted. Three weeks after I first met him, I gave him a new poem of mine, he liked it, and he said, I see you've been reading the French poets we talked about, but I hadn't. It was enough for him to tell me about them to somehow have their influence exercise itself on me. It was as though I'd been invited to join a new family, one where I belonged. I do believe that you can be influenced by writers without reading them.

MD: How?

HM: I've always felt Hawthorne's *Twice Told Tales* influenced me and I've never read one of them. I think that when you're told what a writer is doing, you think, well, that sounds good, maybe I can try that, and then you do something not unlike that author.

MD: Who are some other authors whom you've never read and whom you're influenced by?

HM: Borges, certainly, before I read him. I heard about him while I was writing my first novel, *The Conversions*. I carefully avoided reading him then because what he'd done sounded similar to what I was trying to do and, if he was as good as people said, reading him might stop me doing what I wanted to do.

MD: I haven't seen Borges mentioned in any of your previous interviews.

HM: After I'd read him he didn't influence me at all, although I became an avid fan. It was also reassuring to know that someone was working in a genre of fiction so different from what I'd known. The *New Yorker* was held up as a model of fiction then—I'd tried that way of writing and just couldn't do it.

MD: The first time I discovered your work was *Selected Declarations of Dependence*, so I initially thought of you as a poet. You've talked about how you composed *Tlooth* and it seemed to me the way someone would talk about composing a poem.

HM: You're right. I've always thought as myself as a poet and my ambition in fiction was to write fiction that was organized the way poetry is. Not to write poetic prose or a novel with a poetic texture, but work where fiction doesn't originate in the illusion that we're reproducing some other reality.

MD: Do you feel more comfortable with a project, such as the perverses?

HM: It certainly makes it easier to produce a work of some length, although in the case of *Armenian Papers*, there wasn't a structure at all. (It started as poetry-poems and not prose-poems. Later on I rearranged the lines into paragraphs.) I'd decided to do what Browning did—write a poem a day, and for about 10 days I kept that up. The first poem appeared out of nowhere and I found myself inside another civilization. There was no formal prescription, other than keeping each item to about the same length. With the story in *Declarations*, I limited myself to the vocabulary of the 44 proverbs on which the book is based: a daunting constraint. I had to try putting the words together in different ways, and a love story emerged.

MD: Do you revise your poetry?

HM: I do lots of rewriting in prose, much less in poetry. I suppose I'm scared of destroying the element of surprise—that is to say, what surprised me in writing the poetry. In prose I at least think I know the effect I want to get. I'm much more of a pro in prose than in poetry. I tell myself I write poetry for fun. Often I don't know whether a poem is good or not, but I don't want to screw up the life in it by trying to make it better.

MD: What surprises you in a poem?

HM: It seems to me that in poetry the paradoxical relationship of written language to what it is claiming to say becomes very intense. Even the relations between words themselves achieve a level of dislocation, of disjunction which prose can only equal at exceptional moments. One poem I wrote is

called "Condo Auction," a long, seemingly obscure poem. I thought, OK, this is the way it is and who knows? With time it may achieve some kind of coherence, and I think it ultimately did. Similarly, there's a group of stories I wrote about the same time (published as *The American Experience*) which were generated by a "poetic" procedure of alternating different rhetorical tropes, always with a particular object in mind but without much concern for their immediate coherence. In my recent collection of stories I called them "Stories To Be Read Out Loud" because most readers seemed unable to get these stories—except when I read them in public. At readings, nobody has any problems with them. When they're read silently—we all tend to read too fast—confusion apparently sets in.

MD: In your essay, "To Prizewinners," you take a section of Kafka's story on Don Quixote, and you rewrite it using the same rhythms and sentence constructions. It seems that there is some essence that has to do with sound...

HM: It's not exactly sound. In that essay, I call it "syntax," extending the meaning of the word beyond the relationship between words in a sentence to the relationship between sentences in a paragraph or between paragraphs in a chapter. I claim syntax is where the meaning of a written work essentially lies. In other words, you can write about one thing and mean something else. Rewriting the Kafka piece was intended to demonstrate that meaning and nominal subject matter are not one and the same. In this sense, poetry and the kind of prose that Kafka writes are not that far apart. That's the sort of prose I've always aspired to.

MD: Could you explain "syntax" a little more?

HM: In poetry we're often moved or interested by what isn't there, what we're not told about. I think that is true in fiction, too, but less obviously than in poetry. An example I often give is the Blake poem that begins "O Rose, thou art sick!" There have been many interpretations of it, and none of them suffice. The poem grips us and we don't know what it's about. Clearly something is happening, and it affects us in spite of the ignorance we're left in.

MD: What if you end up with too little? What if there's not enough material for the reader to assemble?

HM: I don't think it's a question of the material. The sound or rather the musical elements are what matter. The syntax of the famous Tyger poem for instance is concentrated in its tightly written quatrains and very bright rhymes; that's what makes it work. A

prose paraphrase would not work at all—it would literally leave out the meaning. That's why I'm fascinated by Mallarmé. If you haven't read Mallarmé in French, find an edition of his poems in French with plain, literal prose translations. That's what you want. They'll provide a solid point of departure. They certainly won't make the poems any clearer to you—they're not meant to be clear. Mallarmé would start with a scene, a woman stretched out on a sofa in front of a fire, let's say. Then in successive versions he leaves the scene farther and farther behind until he reaches a point where the poem is so removed from the original image that it's impossible to reconstruct it. Nevertheless, it's still there, operating, even though we don't know it's there, or we can't explain that it's there, or how it's there. Whatever element of non-literary reality the poem began with has been put through a series of distillations to produce an elixir that is in itself delicious and evocative and can suggest many more things than what gave the poem its start, just the way Blake's poems do. Such poetry aspires to the abstraction that music has.

MD: One school of poetry seems to be trying to corral words into a representation of reality—as a stand in. Then the other school has the unexpected happening even within a supposed narrative. At some point, the language or mystery takes over. Surprise!

HM: Maybe it's surprise, but not only that—let me read you something, something I quote on every possible occasion. It's from an essay by Robert Louis Stevenson called "A Humble Remonstrance." In it he says: "The novel, which is a work of art, exists not by its resemblances to life, which are forced and material, as a shoe must consist of leather, but by its immeasurable difference from life, which is both designed and significant, and is both the method and the meaning of the work." He was saying that about fiction, but it's certainly true about poetry. People can't accept this; they want literature to be about something other than itself. And people will go on trying to prove that it is, until the last mad cow has come home.

MD: How do you feel about readers?

HM: That's what I am. As Laura Riding says, "writing reading isn't all that different from reading writing." In that essay you mentioned, I say the responsibility of the writer is to make the reader the creator by providing the materials and impulse for creation. Some people find this simplistic, but I think that even if it's not the only thing that can be said to happen, it's certainly part of what happens, because who else is present but the reader when reading takes place? The reader's voice is the only living voice around.

MD: They're responsible for the final version anyway.

HM: *Their* final version, at any rate. If the reader can be involved by the poem so that he is actually right there, word after word after word, it's almost as though he were making it up himself. Once you give up the traditional scheme of the poem as having to begin someplace and end someplace else, your interpretation of the poem will become one where the meaning is to be found at every point in every line as you move through it.

MD: One thing about fiction, say, Jane Austen—here's the plot, the riddle, and it's what you follow through everything.

HM: To me, *Persuasion* is the epitome of that. You know from the first page what's going to happen, but you nevertheless get incredibly excited and anxious for this virtually stated conclusion to be worked out.

MD: Did you see the film?

HM: I *never* watch movies of books I like. I'd have to give up being a creator-reader. When you read a book, even the most realistic one, there's a limited amount of detail that can be provided. In Jane Austen's work, there's very little detail, which means that sentence after sentence you are creating the furniture in the room, the clothes people are wearing, the way they talk, the way they look. When you see a

movie, all that has been done for you.

MD: I hear you have a new book in the works, something about the CIA. I was told to ask you if you were in the CIA.

HM: You have to read the book to find out. It's called *My Life in CIA: A Chronicle of 1973* [forthcoming from Dalkey Archive Press, May 2005]. Every American male abroad at that time was thought to be a CIA agent and my own reputation got consolidated by my being on a list compiled by French counterintelligence. The book is about my response to this.

MD: Did you find out why your name was on that list?

HM: Yes, I did.

MD: And...?

HM: You have to have some reason for reading the book.

MD: How much did you research the CIA?

HM: I did, lots. If you're at all interested, there's an absolutely fabulous book...

MD: I am. The Poetry Project community is fascinated by the CIA.

HM: It came out last year. It's by Milt Bearden and James Risen, *The Main Enemy, The Inside Story of the CIA's Final Showdown with the KGB*. Risen reports on intelligence and counterintelligence for the *New York Times*,

Bearden was high up in the CIA. An ideal collaboration and a very informative read.

MD: How would you characterize your reading now? Do you vacillate between high and low reading?

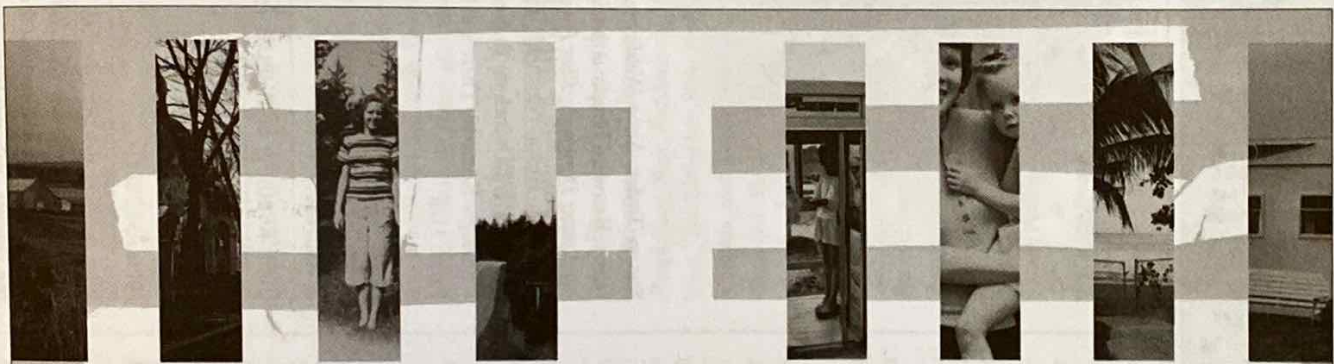
HM: Mainly, I have to read books of writer friends—no, I take that back. It's very irregular. The lowest reading I manage is Patrick O'Brian, whom I admire as well as thrill to.

MD: I guess you didn't see *Master and Commander*.

HM: I wouldn't *think* of it. Most of the fiction I've been reading is fairly recent and that's not just because I know the authors. Do you want to hear what I read in 2003?

MD: Sure.

HM: A couple of books by Sybil Bedford, one of the best writers of the 20th century. I think she's still alive, drinking away happily somewhere in southern England. A biography of Jacques Tati, by David Bellos, the man who wrote the biography of Georges Perec. A couple of books by Robert Coover, *The Grand Hotels of Joseph Cornell* and *The Adventures of Lucky Pierre*. Ben Marcus's second novel, *Notable American Women* (terrific). I read a very interesting book (edited by Laurie Bauer and Peter Trudgill) called *Language Myths*. A gigantic tome devoted to *Some Like it Hot*, with the complete screen-



The Escape

Jo Ann Wasserman

\$14.00
Poetry/Prose, Paper
136 pages, 0-9716800-2-7

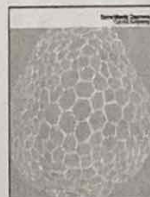
"*The Escape* is a kinetic maelstrom in which Wasserman's attention is always laconic and precise... a music that is intoxicating and unmistakable in its honoring of the turbulence of being alive in the not so distant present, past and future."

—John Yau

"... family footage scattered over the floor and glued back warily as Wasserman constructs her map of escape from that loving tyranny. An extraordinary first book in which every utterance is compelled by the imagination's fleeing from the known."

—Kathleen Fraser

Also available:



Some Mantic Daemons
Garrett Kalleberg

\$12.00
Poetry, Paper
80 pages, 0-9716800-0-0



Under the Sun
Rachel Levitsky

\$12.00
Poetry, Paper
96 pages, 0-9716800-1-9



Futurepoem books is made possible
in part by funding from the New York
State Council on the Arts

Futurepoem

www.futurepoem.com

Available from Small Press Distribution

1-800-869-7553

www.spdbooks.org

POETRY PROJECT

EVENTS CALENDAR

APRIL_MAY 2004

APRIL

12 MONDAY

Deborah Richards & Cedar Sigo

Deborah Richards's work has appeared in *Chain*, *XCP*, *Nocturnes*, *Callaloo*, and *Pam2*, and her first collection of poems, *Last One Out*, was published by subpress in 2003. Cedar Sigo's first chapbook, *Goodnight Nurse*, was published by Angry Dog Press in 2001. He is the editor of *Old Gold Press*, and his *Selected Writings* appeared last year from Ugly Duckling Presse.

14 WEDNESDAY

Eileen Myles & D.A. Powell

Eileen Myles is the author of *Not Me*, *Chelsea Cars*, *Maxfield Parrish*, *School of Fish*, *Cool for You*, *Skies*, and many other books. She is currently working on a novel, *The Inferno*, and an opera, *Hell* (with Los Angeles composer Michael Webster). She is a former Artistic Director of the Poetry Project as well as a former Presidential candidate. D.A. Powell's most recent book is *Cocktails* (Graywolf Press). With Katherine Swiggart, he publishes *Electronic Poetry Review*. He has also recently started a new magazine, *Bent*.

17 SATURDAY

Silent Auction and Fundraiser

The Poetry Project's spring fundraiser this year is a combination of party and silent auction, featuring readings and performances by Edmund Berrigan, Brenda Coultas, Sonic Youth's Thurston Moore, and Edwin Torres. Refreshments will be served in the Parish Hall all afternoon, and items for auction will be on view in the Sanctuary. These include signed books, collages, drawings, letters, manuscript pages, paintings, and prints by Sherman Alexie, John Ashbery, Rudy Burckhardt, Jim Carroll, Clark Coolidge, Jane Freilicher, Philip Guston, Duncan Hannah, Yvonne Jacquette, Jasper Johns, Alex Katz, Lou Reed, George Schuneman, and Kiki Smith, among many others. There's something to suit every pocket, and every cent raised will contribute to the continued existence of the Poetry Project.

13:00pm - 7:00pm / \$10, \$8 members



Steven Taylor, Anne Waldman, Trevor Winkfield, and many others. Kenward Elmslie is the author of over 25 books, including *Routine Disruptions*, *Blast From the Past*, *Cyberspace* and *Snippets* (both with Trevor Winkfield), *Pty Dirt* (with Joe Brainard), and *Nite Soil*. His CDs include *Postcards on Parade* and *Lola* (both from Harbinger Records). There will be a reception afterwards in the Parish Hall.

MAY

3 MONDAY

Open Reading: Sign-up at 7:45 pm [8 pm]

5 WEDNESDAY

John Ashbery

John Ashbery has published more than 20 collections of poetry, beginning in 1953 with *Turandot and Other Poems*. His *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror* won the three major American prizes: the Pulitzer, National Book Award, and National Book Critics Circle Award. He delivered the Charles Eliot Norton Lectures at Harvard in 1989-90, published as *Other Traditions* (Harvard University Press, 2000) and since 1990 he has lectured at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

19 WEDNESDAY

Julie Patton & Lila Zemborain

Julie Patton's multi-dimensional poetics encompasses Julibrarics (handmade books and altered texts), Julibrettos (or improvocitations), and Ju Ju Pulp-its & Con Texts (where the body gets close to the hand turning the pages of the self as a paper doll). Her performance notes for "dOur life in the Ghosts of Bush" were published by Belladonna* as *Not so Belladonna but a Deadly Nightshade*, and *Do Rag on and on* is forthcoming from Tender Buttons. Argentine poet Lila Zemborain's fourth book, *Malvas arquideas del mar*, is forthcoming from Editorial Tse-Tse in Buenos Aires. She is also the author of the book-length essay, *Gabriela Mistral: Una mujer sin rostro* and the director of the Rebel Road reading series. She also curates the KJCC Poetry Series at New York University.

24 MONDAY

Talk Series: reg e gainses, "If Trane Wuz Here"

"If Trane Wuz Here" is an interdisciplinary performance piece which incorporates tap, saxophone, and poetry alongside the music of John Coltrane. Featuring Savion Glover, Matana Roberts, and reg e gainses, the piece explores improvisation using Coltrane standards as "suggestions." Afterwards, gainses will moderate a discussion on how Coltrane's music has inspired their focus, discipline, and attention to detail and craft. reg e gainses is the author of *24/7/365: Head Rhyme Lines*, and *The Original Buckhead*. 2Bkkc3

Shanna Compton's manuscript *Brand New Insects* was recently named a finalist for the Alice James Books Beatrice Hawley Award. She is the Associate Publisher of Soft Skull Press. Joan Larkin's books of poetry include *Housework*, *A Long Sound*, *Sor Juana's Love Poems* (co-translated with Jaime Manrique), and *Cold River*. She serves as Poetry Editor for the new queer literary tri-quarterly, *Bloom*, and co-edits the *Living Out* autobiography series for the University of Wisconsin Press.

19 MONDAY**Open Reading: Sign-up at 7:45 pm [8 pm]****21 WEDNESDAY****Mercedes Roffé & Jerome Rothenberg**

Argentine poet Mercedes Roffé's first book was awarded the Torre Ardoz International Poetry Prize. It was followed by *El tapiz, Cámara baja, La noche y las palabras, Antología poética, Canto errante*, and *Memorial de agravios*. Jerome Rothenberg's most recent book of poems, *A Book of Witness*—his 12th from New Directions—was published in 2003. He is the author of over 70 books of poetry and groundbreaking assemblages such as *Poems for the Millennium*. Scheduled for 2004 are Picasso's *Burial of the Count of Orgaz & Other Poems* (with Pierre Joris) and *Writing Through*, a selection of his translations and related writings from Wesleyan University Press.

26 MONDAY**Cynthia Nelson & Martha Zweig**

Cynthia Nelson is the author of *The Kentucky Rules and Raven Days*, both from Soft Skull Press. A founding editor of *Fort Necessity* magazine, she has also played and toured with a variety of musical projects over the past 10 years. Martha Zweig's books include *Pivers*, *Vinegar Bone* (winner of a Mrs. Giles Whiting Writer's Award) and, most recently, *What Kind* (Wesleyan University Press, 2003).

28 WEDNESDAY**75th Birthday Bash for Kenward Elmslie**

A party to celebrate the 75th birthday of poet, playwright, novelist, librettist, and performer Kenward Elmslie. The evening will include readings, slides, video projections, and musical performances by John Ashbery, Lucia Berlin, Matt Coles, Larry Fagin, John Godfrey, Ann Lauterbach, the cast of Lingo Land, Mac McGinnes, James Morgan, Ron Padgett, Ned Rorem,

Colleen Jensen, Jr., Professor of Languages and Literature at Bard College in Annandale-on-Hudson, New York. His most recent volume of poetry is *Chinese Whispers* (FSG, 2002). A selection of his prose pieces, edited by Eugene Richie, is forthcoming from the University of Michigan Press.

7 FRIDAY**Talk Series: Steve Evans, "The Disobedient Poetics of Determinate Negation"**

This talk will draw on texts, sound files, and video clips by John Cage, Frank O'Hara, Gil Scott-Heron, Jayne Cortez, Robin Blaser, Kevin Davies, Alice Notley, and others to explore an alternative within avant-garde writing to the dominant (and now politically defused) "poetics of indeterminacy." With Jennifer Moxley, Steve Evans co-edited the *Imperceptible Lecture Series* and co-authored *The Dictionary of Received Ideas*. He teaches at the University of Maine, where he coordinates a reading series and co-edits, with Benjamin Friedlander, the journal *Sagetrieb: Poetry & Poetics after Modernism*.

10 MONDAY**Brian Blanchfield & Jeff Clark**

Brian Blanchfield is the author of *Not Even Them*, just out from the University of California Press. His poetry has appeared in *Ploughshares*, *Slope*, *Fort Necessity*, *Volt*, and *Jubilat*. Jeff Clark's first book, *The Little Door Slides Back*, was published in 1997 by Sun & Moon, and has just been reissued by FSG. His second book, *Music and Suicide*, has also just appeared from FSG.

12 WEDNESDAY**Eda: Selected Readings from a Godless Sufism**

An evening of readings from *Eda: A Contemporary Anthology of Turkish Poetry*, edited by Murat Nemet-Nejat and published by Talisman House. Tonight's readers will include Jordan Davis, Maggie Dubris, Ed Foster, Nada Gordon, Murat Nemet-Nejat, Simon Pettet, Gary Sullivan, and Mustafa Ziyalan.

17 MONDAY**Shanna Compton & Joan Larkin****26 WEDNESDAY****Noel Black & Yedda Morrison**

Noel Black is the author, most recently, of *Hulktrons and Inner Visions*. He is also the publisher of Angry Dog Press, which recently released a box set of 27 small chapbooks called *Angry Dog Midget Editions* (www.angrydogpress.com). Yedda Morrison's books include *The Marriage of the Well Built Head, Shed*, and *Crop*. She is currently working on a multimedia project titled *Girl Scout Nation*.

31 MONDAY**Nick Flynn & Laurie Weeks**

Nick Flynn's first book, *Some Elter*, won the PEN/Joyce Osterweil Award, a Discovery prize from The Nation, and other awards. *Another Bullshit Night in Suck City*, a memoir about his father and homelessness, is due out from Norton in October. New York City writer and performer Laurie Weeks is currently finishing her book *Zipper Mouth*. A contributor to the screenplay for *Boys Don't Cry*, Weeks toured the country in 1999 with Sister Spit, a group of girl-punk writers in San Francisco.

JUNE**2 WEDNESDAY****Andrei Codrescu & Jonas Mekas**

Andrei Codrescu's books include *Wakefield, It Was Today: New Poems*, and *Alien Candor: Selected Poems 1970-1997*. He is a regular commentator on National Public Radio and has written and starred in the Peabody Award-winning movie, *Road Scholar*. He is MacCurdy Distinguished Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, LA, where he edits *Exquisite Corpse: a Journal of Letters & Life* (www.exquisitecorpse.org). Jonas Mekas is the author of several volumes of poetry and prose in Lithuanian and English. His films have won numerous national and international awards. His latest film is called *As I Was Moving Ahead Occasionally I Saw Brief Glimpses Of Beauty*, and his latest book of poetry is *Daybooks*, published this year by Portable Press at Yo-Yo Labs.

The Poetry Project is located at St. Mark's Church in-the-Bowery_131 East 10th Street_ New York City 10003_www.poetryproject.com

All events are \$8, \$7 for seniors and students, \$5 for members and begin at 8 pm unless otherwise noted. Programs are subject to change. For information call (212) 674-0910.

play, corrected typescript, lots of anecdotes and so forth. My wife put me onto an excellent autobiographical book by Gertrude Stein, *Wars I Have Seen*. Jean Echenoz's latest novel, *Au piano*; he's one of my favorite writers. Robert Glück's glorious novel, *Margery Kempe Gazelle*, my favorite book of all by Rikki Ducornet. I finally finished reading Madame de Sevigné's voluminous correspondence. A book on American English by Allen Walker Reid, a famous philologist who among other things discovered the origin of "OK." John Ashbery's *Chinese Whispers*. *Embers*, by Sándor Márai, which I didn't think was quite as great as some. *Darling* by Honor Moore. Ron Padgett's wonderful biography of his father, *Oklahoma Tough*. Anne Hollander's fascinating *Fabric of Vision: Dress and Drapery in Painting*. The third book of Viktor Shklovsky's trilogy, *Third Factory*. *Breezeless Harbor* by Patrick O'Brian. A book called *The Poet's Calendar* by a fellow Oulipian, Michelle Grangaud. Alison Fell's nifty novel, *Tricks of the Light*. An enthralling autobiographical work by Keith Waldrop, *Light While There Is Light*. Ben Jonson's *Epicure or the Silent Woman*. Alice Massat's brilliant and funny new novel, *Le Code civile*. Then two books by Richard Holmes, the literary historian, *Dr. Johnson and Mr. Savage*, about Dr. Johnson's first strange friendship when he came to London, and *Sidetracks: Explorations of a Romantic Biographer* (second time). *Around the Park* by Barbara Henning, which I liked a lot. An installment in Jacques Roubaud's series of autobiographical writings. F.T. Prince, *The Doors of Stone*. A collection of George Perec's interviews and lectures. A first-rate Hungarian novel called *The Door* (or perhaps *The Gate*—I read it in French) by Magda Szabo. Albert Camus's last book, a most compelling one, *Le premier Homme*. Dallas Wiebe's latest, *The Vox Populi Street Stories*. A second reading of *Splendide-Hôtel* by Gilbert Sorrentino. William Gaddis's essays and occasional writings. Another book—I look at the title and don't remember reading it at all. This is terrible.

MD: Do you keep a journal of what you read?

HM: Why yes, I wouldn't remember them otherwise. Then Laird Hunt, *The Impossibly*. A book by Colette about changing apartments in Paris, quite wonderful. Gilbert Sorrentino's collected stories, *The Moon and its Flight*. Carmen Firan, a Romanian writer, mainly a poet. She's very good. I discovered her hearing her read at the Brooklyn Library a couple of years ago. This is a book about life in Romania just before the "revolution"—*The Farce. On and Off the Avenue* by Eileen Hennessy. A play by a French friend, Richard Morgiève. And, last but not least, an extraordinary book by someone named Sara Macaphee. I was alone in New York for while a year and a half

ago, and I'd often have dinner at the bar of Gotham on 12th St. One evening a nice couple came in and we started chatting. She was a teacher of art history. I said, what's your specialty? She said 17th-century Italian architecture. And I asked, oh, have you published anything? And she said yes, it's about Bernini's belltowers for St. Peter's. And I stopped and thought and finally said, but there are no belltowers on St. Peter's. She said, that's what the book's about. I ordered it and couldn't put it down. It's technical and scholarly, as scholarly as you can get in a book called *Bernini and the Belltowers: Architecture and Politics at the Vatican*, and enthralling. It's pricey, though—maybe you could put it on a credit card and then change your address.

MD: Maybe they have it at the Strand.

HM: Lots of pictures, too. So that's it, honey, the reading list for 2003. I just finished *Nine Stories* by Robert Walser. He's probably one of John's and my favorite writers.

MD: He's someone whose work you've been following for years.

HM: I've always hoped he would influence me, but I'm afraid that's too much to hope. It's very hard to pin down what he does. He's completely unlike anybody, including Kafka. I had the loveliest "real-life" experience, thanks to him. I love hiking, and hiking in Europe is great because you go out and walk all day long in any direction and you're always assured of finding a nice restaurant at the end of the trail. A man called Karl Seelig published a collection of conversations with Robert Walser. Seelig used to visit him on Sundays in the asylum in Herisau where Walser had had himself confined, and they would go off on a walk, no matter what the weather was. They would explore different areas of this part of Switzerland—the part where women only got the vote a couple of years ago by federal decree. Totally reactionary, I guess, nevertheless a pocket of wonders. Around Appenzell. That's where I went. Everyday I would go on one of their walks, then I'd come home at night and read about what had happened to them when they'd gone over the same terrain. So one day I set out on a road up a mountainside, and after a couple of hours, about 10 in the morning, I came to a village. I had a piece of bread and a glass of white wine and then went the rest of the way up this mountain. I must have gotten up there around noon, then I walked down on the other side of the mountain to a town on the Austrian border called Altstatten. I misjudged my timing and arrived there at 10 past two. I went into a restaurant and said I was famished, could I have lunch? They said, the kitchen's closed, you can only have a cold lunch. I said, I really feel like something hot.

So I walked a little farther and went into another restaurant. Same story, only cold food. I asked them, is there no place in town I can get a hot meal? They said, yes, there's a hotel on the square at the bottom of the hill. One of the big squares in town, you can't miss it. Just walk down the street you're on and you'll get to the Drei Kronigen, something like that. I went in and had this lovely lunch. That evening after dinner I went to my room and read about what Walser and Seelig had done. They had started up the same path I had taken, and at 10 they got to the same village as I and had some bread and white wine, and then they had gone on to the top of the mountain. They'd gone down the other side, they'd gotten to Altstatten at 10 past 2, they went into one restaurant and were only offered cold food, then went to the second restaurant where there was only cold food, and then they went down to the Drei Kronigen (if that is indeed its name) where they had their lunch, just like me. I felt as though an angel had reached down and patted me on the head. It was like a recognition of this intimacy I had always felt with him. The restaurateurs of Altstatten were following the same pattern...

MD: They never learned that hikers would like a hot lunch! Who besides John are some poets you correspond with?

HM: Bill Berkson. Ron Padgett to some extent. In France, mainly people in the Oulipo: Jacques Roubaud, Ian Monk, Jacques Jout. Most of my other poet friends are dead, alas. André du Bouchet in France. Kenneth [Koch], Jimmy [Schuyler], Jimmy Merrill. I mustn't leave out Gilbert Sorrentino. I didn't know he'd ever written a poem until he gave me a slim volume and I was, as they used to say, blown away. I've only met him twice, but we exchange letters monthly and have been doing so for 10 years or more.

MD: Are there younger poets or prose writers with whom you correspond?

HM: Well, Ben Marcus. Lynne Tillman. A Canadian called André Alexis, whom I admire enormously. Barbara Henning Dawn Michelle Baude and I used to be in touch. Mark Ford. Vincent Katz. Tom Mandel, a very good poet, a philosophical poet, a rare breed on our shores. Albert Mobilio. Lynn Crawford. She's a great friend and a most original talent. Lytle Shaw. Mark Swartz, who wrote a very funny first novel [*Instant Karma*] about a man who plans to burn down the town library. Also Doug Nufer, Alan Wearne in Australia, Cydney Chadwick, Richard Beard, Honor Moore, Raphael Rubinstein, Schuldt—the word "younger" is giving me trouble. At this point, practically *everybody* is younger.

DANIEL AND DELLA

When the obliging pastor confessed at morning service to being off his form, his congregation immediately wondered if it could be the old problem with his teeth; a quite invisible problem, even if it did seem to tacitly manifest itself in the disconcerting orange color his teeth had acquired from a lifetime of pipe-smoking. The flow of his words, even in familiar prayers, was today uneven, so that he sounded open to doubt – not physical anxiety but a metaphysical doubt that seemed to open a tunnel of despair into his beliefs.

One parishioner, named Della, knew where that tunnel led: straight to self-loathing, to a semi-suicidal fog whose indefinite form made escape from it difficult, even impossible. She decided she must open a way out for the pastor. (His name was Daniel.) She loved him. His teeth, his health, his failing voice, his possibly lethal doubt could not stem the flow of her devotion to him: he was a noble and ardent man.

Outside, in the orange light the winter sun cast on the frozen ground and bundled flock (an orange light more sinister than any dusk), waiting for him to emerge from the gray tunnel of the cold stone church, Della stood at the side of the churchyard while the flow of worshippers quickly made their way homewards. Della thought: perception has its own form that determines other forms, that was the domain where she must act to effect. She must get her teeth into Daniel's problem where it seemed least palpable, least open to the operation of mere words, mere thoughts, mere counsel.

Through the open church door Daniel appeared, wearing his humility like a visible misery. She needed an orange of the Hesperides (which she knew those apples really were) to give him something to sink his teeth into—a love-apple to bite through. She would be that apple. She would follow him into his tunnel and fill it with the blaze of her naked body, and with his own naked body form a nexus of fire that would reconfigure their lives. You cannot go with the flow always, Della told herself, you cannot tolerate the Taoist dictum when the flow leads straight to death.

She walked across the yard to where he stood, her open face and arms a declaration he could not mistake. He would tell himself he must stay true to form, she knew that. She must shatter that resistance. It seemed the whole world was turning orange, whether from the light or her passion she couldn't tell. She slid fingers inside his coat, she would tunnel a way under his pathetic crust. And Daniel understood. He suddenly bared his orange teeth in an alarming but rapturous smile: "Do you mean what I think you mean?" his teeth helplessly whistled. "I've wanted you for ages," Della began, and the flow of her words wrapped him as in a warm cerement, he saw himself enter another tunnel of yielding doors and hallucinatory penumbra and her own open flesh. Daniel's metaphysical doubts and concerns were subsumed in a violet, green, and orange tempest that was too present, too fleeting to be defined by any form—it dissolved into an endless tunnel of blazing orange as bright as the teeth of the smiling, suddenly open sun. Its only form was that of renewal's unforeseen and unending flow.

Harry Mathews

BOOK REVIEWS

MARK MCMORRIS *THE BLAZE OF THE POU*

*The University of Georgia Press, 2003,
\$16.95*

In his second collection of poems, Jamaican-born Mark McMorris moves through and around the history of European colonization of the Caribbean, pulling that history into the present as he sifts through the ambiguities of identity and language left in its wake. The rigorousness of his exploration is intermingled here with a lyric beauty that swells to the limits of the line, making his poems into "the lustrous equation dense with meaning and seductive" that he describes in the book's opening poem.

Three epigraphs introduce the knot at the heart of this collection, the inseparability of the conquest, with all its self-aggrandizing cruelty, and the land and culture conquered. In the first, Columbus, with condescending generosity, claims he would convert the people "rather by love than by force" while in the second, Donne, in his "Elegie XIX," enthuses, "How blest am I in this discovering Thee!" In the third epigraph we meet the Yellow Pou. Luscious symbol of the islands, the tree is introduced in the framework of English science. The book quoted, *Trees of the Caribbean* by S.A. Seddon and G.W. Lennox, contains this flowering in the space of its definition, locking it in with a Latin binomial. As one of the first to address colonization of the Caribbean in poetry, Aimé Césaire called upon his Martinique to rise up and eclipse European dominion. The speaker of these poems may occasionally try to enter the fantasy of an idyllic past, but he is beyond thinking colonial history can be undone. "That's the paradox/ of being from an offshore rock," he tells us, "how to put out/ the wide savagery when you're inside the beast."

The poet asks himself what his role is now that the "umbilical tear" prevents him from speaking in an original language. "The sibyl is long dead/ who spoke the (m)other tongue" he laments, the Greek oracle coming to equal the islands' past and the supposed visionary power of the poet. Unlike the exuberant Donne, this poet is "bewildered by loss" and "faltering" and yet, somehow, his history of loss is also one of abundance. In verse drenched with classical poetics, McMorris establishes himself as both vehicle and maker of a poetic tradition extending back to the ancients. Ovid, Catullus, and Homer mingle with "Errol, or

Maiah, or Hedley" in the body of these poems, and their meeting becomes the source of the lines, as "the guy hanging on iron" on a D.C. basketball court is "a source of seed and metaphors." The book closes with an epithalamion, the lyric form that celebrates and encourages a newly married couple on their wedding night, and that here brings a new sweetness to the many conflicted unions of the poems.

It is the erotics of language itself that finally carry the speaker through this "mangle of history." McMorris is a poet utterly devoted to the sensual beauty of language and he crafts lines dense and strong enough to bear the crashing forces of history and identity contained within them. McMorris brings many literary histories to his work: Caribbean, European, and American poetics all meet here. While certain voices go a little stiff—I'm thinking of the formal language of the epithalamion and the occasionally overly explicative voice of the conqueror in "Journal of a Voyage to Undiscovered Lands"—when McMorris brings language, longing, and the physical world together, allowing diverse contemporary voices to rise up and carry his poems, his work is wrenching, lovely, and powerfully seductive.

Sasha Watson is a writer and translator living in New York City.

JOHN ASHBERY IN CONVERSATION WITH MARK FORD

Between the Lines, 2003, \$19.95

Reading this 50-page-long interview was as fun as eating blue cotton candy on the Coney Island Ferris Wheel. The conversation covers everything from Ashbery's childhood down on the farm in Sodus to his take on language poetry—whose "experiments," he insists, he "follows [...] at a distance." The bonhomie between Ford and Ashbery is so apparent that I feel I'm privy to a relaxed and exciting conversation between friends, even as Ford gently pushes the characteristically reticent Ashbery to discuss poetics.

Also included in the book is a selection of photographs of J.A. as a) adorable little baby; b) charming boy; c) gorgeous sultry teenager; d) '50s and '60s New York School/Paris sophisticate; e) '70s camp hunk with big hair and open-collared shirt; and f) distinguished elder statesman with wry smile. There are two new poems, as well as a good bibliography. On top of all this, there's a great selection of reviews featuring both downbeat and rhapsodic assessments of

Ashbery's work. My favorite is Mona Van Duyn's unintentionally positive review of *The Tennis Court Oath*; "If a state of continuous exasperation, a continuous frustration of expectation, a continuous titillation of the imagination are sufficient response to a series of thirty-one poems, then these have been successful. But to be satisfied with such a response I must change my notion of poetry." Exactly.

The elegance and humor we come to expect from Ashbery's recent poetry, as well as his erudite yet unpretentious take on literary tradition, are manifest here even in his slightest statements. For instance, Ford asks whether Ashbery's a Leo, and Ashbery replies magnificently, "Yes [...] I was born at 8:20 am, and there was a thunderstorm at the time, which may be significant." That's the so-called New York School in a nutshell—self-deprecation, Shelley-like romanticism, quotidian focus on the present, and rejection of manifesto-like position-taking all uttered in a pithy twirl. Note similar moments throughout the conversation. Ashbery bemusedly redefines the word "remodeled" as "winterized." He pretends not to remember the title of his book *Flow Chart*. He insists that Auden chose *Some Trees* as the Yale Younger Poets prize because "otherwise he wouldn't get paid for editing the series that year, and he was short of cash." Perhaps most wonderfully there's his analysis of why his work seemed to take off in the mid-1960s: "I always felt that the drug culture must have zeroed in on my poetry—at least I had visions of people sitting around and getting stoned, reading it aloud, and saying, 'Man, listen to this!'"

However, the book is infuriating (in an admittedly charming sort of way) because Ashbery doesn't give anything away. If you want to buy this book because you think Ashbery will reveal the secrets to his compositional practice or take some kind of aesthetic position that roots him squarely within one tradition or another, this isn't your day. If, however, you're entranced by Ashbery's language and can't get enough of it, then I urge you to pick up a copy. I'm almost embarrassed to admit I enjoyed this conversation as much as, if not more than, recent Ashbery poems. Please remind me—what's the difference between a conversation and a poem?

Daniel Kane is the author of All Poets Welcome: The Lower East Side Poetry Scene in the 1960s (University of California Press).

JO ANN WASSERMAN
THE ESCAPE

Futurepoem Books, 2003, \$14

Jo Ann Wasserman, in her first full-length book, explores autobiographical subject matter that was not present in her two slim but impressive chapbooks (*what counts as proof* and *we build mountains*). The dual themes here are preoccupations that seem to have been with the author her entire adult life: anxieties involved with writing itself (or, rather, not writing), and the memory of and complicated feelings about her mother, Nancy, who died in 1986 at the age of 53 in a horrific car crash (which we gradually learn about), when the author was 18.

In the opening section, MEMORIA, the "writing" element of Wasserman's subject matter is in the forefront, with passages from diaries from the '90s and references to notes that may have been made much earlier, which are not so much elucidated as encapsulated within a larger narrative. There is something strangely cinematic about many of Wasserman's diaristic scenarios. There is also a deceptive simplicity in the diction, and she is a master of repetition—words and phrases and scenes reappear throughout the text, gradually illuminating the past. Apropos, this book should not be browsed through, but

read like a novel, from beginning to end.

The prose of MEMORIA acts as a prologue and gives way to the First Enkomion Sequence, a series of eight rather "veiled" poems ranging from six to 107 lines, some or all of which may be descriptions and imaginative elaborations of childhood photographs. The complexity of the interaction between "objective" memory and retrospective feelings about "you" (the author's mother) take over these oblique encomia (poems of praise) and most of the rest of the book.

Next, we come to 11 extraordinary sestinas. Sestinas, especially in groups, can be tedious, but Wasserman's were so tense and exhilarating that I would consistently forget what form they were in until coming to the concluding three-line coda—which was often breathtaking. These sestinas are all the more astonishing because many revolve around such "exciting" events as a mother going to the city on the train to have a root canal and taking her young daughter along. Further, when one *does* get around to noticing the end words, they are such as would make a poetry class groan if given as an assignment—*Jesus saving anchor saving spring scream* being one example.

Part Two begins with "Write a Poem," a prose description of the author's stay in a cold-water rented cottage on Nova Scotia (in

1999), where her mother's family was from or spent time — followed by seven more of her tour-de-force sestinas, the last of which "Funeral/September" (her mother's) parallels the last one in the first group, "Funeral/July" (her maternal grandfather's). Part III consists of a Second Enkomion Sequence (ten poems), and "The Escape," the most straightforward prose in the book, which relates the family tensions shortly before the author's "escape" to college soon to be followed by her mother's fatal drive. But there was to be one last, unsatisfying, time together for mother and daughter when the parents visit the school. They say an awkward goodbye as the father waits in the car, impatient to get going.

I should emphasize that, as "emotional" as some of this synopsis may sound, there is no sentimentalizing or self-pity. The poignancy and pathos come from the art, not special pleading, and the style is never heavy. In *The Escape*, Wasserman has incorporated her notebook anxieties into an ambitious and successful piece of writing and constructed a moving personal tribute to her mother, as well. In the process, she has given us a literary work of a very high order.

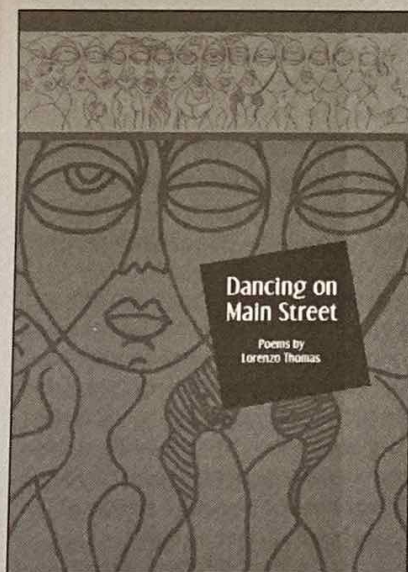
Tony Towle's most recent book is The History of the Invitation: New & Selected Poems 1963 - 2000 (Hanging Loose Press, 2001).

New
poetry
from
Coffee
House
Press

Coffee House Press
(612) 338-0125
coffeehousepress.org

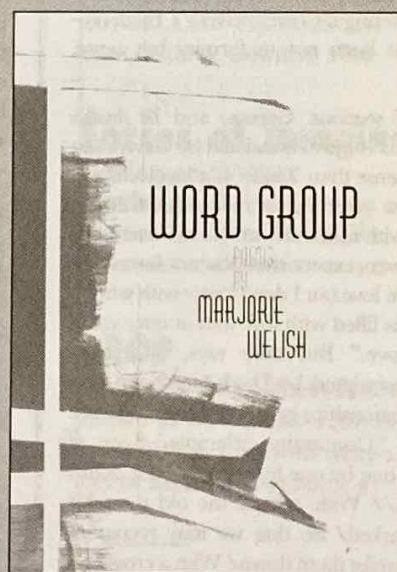
Small Press Distribution
(800) 869-7553 spdbooks.org

*Available at fine
bookstores everywhere*



Dancing on Main Street
by Lorenzo Thomas

\$15.00 | 1-56689-156-6 | APRIL 2004
"Lorenzo Thomas's poems have a graceful New York School nonchalance that can swiftly become a hard and cutting edge when he writes of the African American experience." —JOHN ASHBERY



Word Group
by Marjorie Welsh

1-56689-157-4 | \$15.00 | APRIL 2004
"Very few American poets explore the mechanisms of lyric voicing, poetic syntax and poetic logic with the determined focus of Marjorie Welsh."
—MICHAEL PALMER

JEAN FRÉMON
DISTANT NOISE
Avec Books, 112 pages, \$14

Poet, novelist, art critic, and gallerist Jean Frémon once wrote: "A painting is a kind of ghost like those that haunt attics. Spirit rests in things ... capable of waiting for centuries for other spirits to evoke it, to wake it, to make it speak." A similar philosophy underlies his poetry—his quiet observations are stirred to life by the force and spirit of the language around them, and the vast language outside the poetry itself creating a constant, ghostly circle around it. Hence, perhaps, the title of his collection, *La Vraie nature des ombres* (the true nature of ghosts), sections from which are included here in this selection of Frémon's works as translated by Norma Cole, Lydia Davis, Serge Gavronsky and Cole Swenson.

The first section, *Theater*, translated by Swenson, is the one most directly concerned with the ephemeral communicative and material properties of language. In it, an abstemious, scolding emperor instructs a group of "intractable" students. Groping for meaning, the students land in austere moments of beauty that ultimately slip from their grasp, without even the words to capture them: Both students and emperor become and forgo themselves in a series of frozen, dislocated, often eerily rapturous moments. "Even if they were aware of the fragile agreement, even if they knew in advance they would have to renounce it, they prepared in silence, entering into themselves.// From repetition was born not uniformity but sense, accident."

Two brief sections, *Ceremony* and *Yet Another Story Without An End*, translated by Gavronsky, are more tense than *Theater*, but involve much of the same yearning for meaning. *Yet Another Story* toys with romanticism: "I have overcome all my powers except that obscure force. She says I am in love but I don't know with whom! My heart is filled with love and at once emptied of love." But only toys, ultimately. *Equation*, translated by Davis, notes the precarious relationships between things, between moments: "Continuity principle/ Law of rebound/ one by one he predicts/ the points of erosion// With a cross the old thoughts will be marked/ So that we may recognize them and strike them down/ With a cross/ So that we may honor them." In this section, Frémon is more staccato in his language and his rush of images and thoughts than he has been. And still, the ghostly shadow sides of language, of the relations between language and concept...

Swenson, who translated Frémon's novel *Island of the Dead*, takes on the book's final section, *Herisau*. In it, we see that, though the

journey from the book's first word to the last is disorienting, entrancing, troublesome and various, it begins with an invitation of sorts ("But the sentence is perfectly smooth. /-You don't know, you don't know.") and ends with a graceful refusal of that invitation, which, once perceived, illuminates the book's subtle, libidinal choreography of enchanting proposal and gentle decline. The book ends: "A verb followed by an object is a proposition. Countless present themselves every second. It's hard to choose. Suddenly, sometimes, the propositions disperse and leave you in peace."

It is a luxury to see Frémon's work interpreted by four such intriguing and talented translators. And as Cole, Davis, Gavronsky, and Swenson are very different translators, it would have been interesting to see the work in the original French. Along these lines, I was surprised to see that there was no information whatsoever on the original publications. This omission of information aside, *Distant Noise* is a startlingly smart and fine collection of the work of one of France's most innovative and enigmatic poets, as rendered into English by four outstanding writer/translators.

Caroline Crumpacker is the poetry editor for FENCE and curator of the bilingual poetry series.

ELENI SIKELIANOS
THE MONSTER LIVES OF BOYS AND GIRLS
Green Integer, 2003, \$10.95

The Monster Lives of Boys and Girls opens with desire: "All my good ideas, come/back to me!" ... "I want the animals/to come to me from far and wide." Desire is a constant concern of the work, and the poems seem driven by longing, flowing down the page in fluid, shifting forms.

This always frustrated desire ignites the work's investigatory nature, signaled by a kind of obsessive reportage and collecting that encompasses both the natural world and urban horror: "A cup of/shit on the subway? (I saw it) . . . But I will shout this dream out to you/ as soon as I have learned another bird-bone by heart" ("Captions for my Instruction Booklet"). The physical self is a constant object of excavation: "We will awake up and want/ to wedge a ladder into what/ is iniquitous in us; softer/ tissues wear/ grooves of history/ into bone" ("Letter to Self").

Sound is one way the poems posit to leave the rational self: "let/ k's and g's collide when things get/ too near my thinking, a ricochet in the inner/ ear where dark thoughts are accruing/ through the things things think ("The Cooking Stove Has a Thought"). Other tricks for escaping the conscious mind include accessing the animal world and the world of objects, as well as going back in both personal and evolutionary time: "My favorite thing


when I was a child was/ animals, and-/ all of them." . . . "Incline the binary brain toward it (earth) and hear/ the astonishing song of rocks and dirt—who walks here/ over crust formed before fishes or wings—all the/ first things" ("The Bright, The Heavy"). In the long poem that forms the section "Summer at St.-Nazaire," the overwhelming presence of the ocean enact this sense of self-dissolution.

The air of metaphysical wonder give these poems an aura of ancient time similar to Sikelianos's contemporary Lisa Jarnot. But, like Jarnot, the speaker in these poems is not the Romantic, ordering I, subsuming the natural world into its own vision of the Sublime. Rather, the I is subjugated by its own desire, broken into pieces by longing and by its own flawed perceptions: "I find myself a casual// organism, sex// made sad, corn's false smut in a teary morning light—a shredded/ veil of golden tones scrambling to reassemble the sweeter hours stashing/ pistachios in my armpits" ("Joy's the Aim").

While these poems celebrate the capacity of the imagination to conjure endless objects of longing, they also critique a capitalist culture that mutates that desire into something monstrous: "Daddy, look, it's a Spiderman butt, please please/ I want it! I really want// that shiny micronaut bubblegum wrapper, everything!" ("The Monster Lives of Boys and Girls"). They also reference September 11, 2001, and the ensuing war, particularly in the final poem, "Dream Poem Two (reprisal)." I particularly admire "The Lake," in which a meditation on war in Afghanistan comes in the midst of observations of autumn and anticipation of the return of a lover. It comes off not as trite or overly dramatic but as individual and true.

Many of these poems feel like dreams to me—familiar in that way. I think that is their power. They tickle my most ancient neurons; they arouse my knowing of being.

Allison Cobb is the author of *Born Two*, *Chax*



**BAD T-SHIRTS
FOR BAD INFANTS
& TODDLERS!**

A tick named Vlad
filled up with blood.
Now his visage vile
bears a blissful smile

www.babywit.com/ostashevsky.php

BABYWIT proudly presents 4 children's
T-shirts from "The Book of Pets"
Poetry by Eugene Ostashevsky
Images by Eugene Timerman

NATHANIEL DORSKY
DEVOTIONAL CINEMA
Tuumba Press, 2003, \$10

How does a movie change your life? Independent filmmaker Nathaniel Dorsky has been figuring it out for years, and the result is this handsome philosophical monograph that, like any good film, should be absorbed in one sitting. If you don't experience multiple epiphanies from it, you're watching too much TV and you need to get out of the house and into a large, dark room with some other beings "observing incandescence."

In Dorsky's hands, "devotion" is not a specifically religious framework or subject, but a transformative power that "subverts our absorption in the temporal and reveals the depths of our own reality." What especially distinguishes this particular kind of revelation is its simultaneously shared experience. Dorsky recounts seeing Rossellini's *Voyage to Italy* for the first time and finding himself and his fellow filmgoers in an elevator afterwards, with tears in their eyes, "unusually available" to one another.

Where does film get this eerie power to alter the way we see the world? With disarmingly elemental and appealing logic, Dorsky builds the case for a "concordance between film and our own human metabolism" that works on the most visceral level. He begins, Genesis-like, with the given condition: "After all, here we are, on a planet, illuminated by a glowing star." (I'm already leaping ahead to the carbon arc hissing inside the projector.) "The temperature is at least reasonable, and we have the freedom to walk around and look at things." (There's your movie, already starting to form.)

He proceeds to explore a half dozen dimensions within film, and establishes bipolar tensions at work in each: Alchemy (material vs. subject), The Illuminated Room (objective vs. subjective ways of seeing), Intermittence (existence vs. nonexistence), Time (flowing vs. absolute now), Self-Symbol (essence vs. metaphor), and Shots and Cuts (empathy vs. clarity). I've greatly oversimplified these dualisms. Each dimension has multiple dimensions within, and Dorsky vivifies them with compelling claims: "Bach's organ chorale preludes are as much an expression of skeletal fingers pressing down on ivory keys and releasing air through pipes as they are melodic evocations of prayer."

The thesis ripens as each dimension plays out in both film and our own physical reality, such as the parallel between the intermittence of film frames and our synapses firing. In each case it turns out that a balance between the competing pulls is required for the film to suc-

ceed, to produce a salubrious response in the viewer.

By the end, Dorsky's humanistic argument is irresistible. "When a film is truly manifest it may serve as a corrective mirror that realigns our psyches and opens us to appreciation and humility."

Not only Rossellini, but other pantheon filmmakers like Dreyer, Ozu, Antonioni, Godard, and Ford are on hand to bring it down to cases. And have I mentioned the writing? Dorsky writes with the surefooted philosophical authority of a Max Picard. It speaks for itself. Here is Dorsky on Ford:

His shots peer into the oncoming light. We, the audience, the camera, are in darkness, gazing into the ephemeral, luminous world. The concreteness of heaven and earth, and the verticality of the human spine, are Ford's cosmic architecture. The cuts are crystalline synapses of confidence igniting the cinematic air. The story is expressed by the progression of shots and cuts them selves.

Devotional Cinema will open your eyes on every page to how films work and ideally rouse you to see or revisit *La Notte*, *The Passion of Joan of Arc*, and *Late Spring*. One caution—don't try this at home. The evasions and inadequacies of the little pixel box will guarantee an experience that is smaller than life.

Alan Bernheimer goes to the movies in Berkeley. His latest book of poems is Billionesque (The Figures, 1999).

KRISTIN PREVALLET
SCRATCH SIDES: POETRY, DOCUMENTATION
AND IMAGE-TEXT PROJECTS
Skanky Possum Books, 2002, \$10

Prevallet's new collection brings together selections from nine conceptual process-based projects that apply deliberately scientific structuring methods to poetry as an investigation into overdetermined socio-textual constructions of (human) meaning. Throughout the book, the lines between ideology, desire, and "objective" scientific discourse shift and expose the complex material productions of each, through each, towards, as approximation. If it is empirical work, it is so in the sense that knowing emerges through observation and praxis, and not through a pure contemplation of forms. It is 'fun' 'work'!

The book begins with a selection from Prevallet's 1996 Primitive Publications chapbook *Lead, Glass, & Poppy*, written using what she calls "synchronous thinking," which involves linking the "ideas in one's head and stories in the news" at the level of the sign, usually, or concept. The poems exist on two sides of a vertical line that divides each page—on the left is a lyrical passage that is

KELSEY ST. PRESS

30 YEARS OF
www.kelseyst.com

Go to
www.kelseyst.com
for special discounts
& events

Nest

Mei-mei Berssenbrugge
poetry **Richard Tuttle** cover

This book unites so many supposedly unreconcilable genres and tones that it's a must-have for anyone interested in the mutation of literary forms in our time....There are group portraits in here that astound. **W.B. KECKLER,**
RAIN TAXI PAPERBACK \$14

Instan

poem/drawing **Cecilia Vicuña**

In this radiant new collection...
Vicuña's interdisciplinary drawings exhibit their formidable lineage: Mallarme's constellations, Apollinaire's calligrams, concrete poetry, Michaux's calligraphic drawings. **MÓNICA DE LA TORRE,**
POETRY PROJECT NEWSLETTER
PAPERBACK \$15, LIMITED EDITION
WITH ORIGINAL DRAWING \$100

Forces of Imagination:

Writing on Writing
Barbara Guest essays on
poetics **Laurie Reid** drawings
PAPERBACK \$14, HARDCOVER \$25

CROP

poetry **Yedda Morrison** Crop
shows us how poetry can be made
interchangeable with activism.
KEVIN KILLIAN PAPERBACK \$11

Occupied

FRANCES JAFFER FIRST BOOK AWARD FOR
2003 **Carol Mirakove** poetry
PAPERBACK \$10

TEL 510.845.2260 FAX 510.548.9185

KELSEY ST. PRESS

ideologically inflected by journalistic excisions on the right, creating a mobile-like map (she calls it a sunburst pattern) or "poem."

The experience of reading in these poems is like glimpsing contradictory flickering messages that begin to weave a larger abstract pattern—there is a kind of demonstration of the dual movement between the 'sources' and the 'poem' that implies a degree of mutual determination between the "real" and the "imaginary" that strikes me as deeply materialist. While the form is rational, the content *appears* to be the occult, bizarre or fantastic. Yet the 'real' content, as I read it, is an investigation into the gray zone between the terminology of so-called rational objective discourses of the newspaper and science magazines, and the "mystical"—a reflexive structural understanding (and implicit critique) of technological faith. Prevallet insists on making her compositional methods explicit, thus further destabilizing the notion that there can be an "outside" to the historical in the constitutive process of "knowing."

Similar sampling techniques are used in the second selection, "Lyric Infiltration." A shadowy figure in the background is Jack Spicer and his "Homage to Creeley" (you can read KP's essay on it in Jacket 7 online). Yet while Spicer's sources are parasitical unknowns

("Martians") that jam the frequencies and rearrange the furniture (i.e. you'll get bruises coming home drunk to a dark room), Prevallet's trace and de-suture the ideological and ontological "spiritual" moment. She turns Spicer inside out. In her essay in Tripwire 2, "Sampling out of this World," she differentiates between collage and sampling in that "both re-contextualize the original reference... [but] collage consumes the reference, [while] sampling allows the seams to show."

My favorite sections are "Reading Index (texte indice)" and selections from "The People Database," both in some sense collaborations with visual artists. Inspired by artist Terrence Gower, "Reading Index (texte indice)" are written on graph paper next to squiggling line graphs that chart the poem along various "axes" such as "Image, Code and Abstraction," or "Anger, Fear, Anxiety and Confusion." Relish the somersaults they perform on Pound's statement in *The Spirit of Romance* that "poetry is a sort of inspired mathematics, which gives us equations, not for abstract figures, triangles, spheres, and the like, but equations for the human emotions."

"The People Database" is a collaboration with Belgian Artist Annemie Maes where text is added to the scanned back flap of real passport photos that have been discard-

ed and collected from photo shops, some of which are perfectly recognizable, others mutilated beyond recognition by chemicals. These pieces seem to have taken the mechanics of context of the earlier works a step further: the maps morph into conceptual vehicles, so that the context is operating as a wide stream of information instead of at an atomic ideological level.

An undeniable influence on the work is Jackson Mac Low, but unlike Prevallet, much of his work utilizes what he calls deterministic methods or chance methods, though he identifies what he calls deliberate or liminal composition, as well as something called impulse chance. Both of these latter methods allow more organic material into the compositions, while still enabling the writer to retain procedural methods. This allows, one might argue, for the authorial "seams to show" in the text, recognizing that claims to have entirely removed one's concerns, intentions, social-psychology, sexuality and expressive mark is perhaps slightly disingenuous. Prevallet's "Notes on Composition, a.k.a demystifying the process" at the end of the book certainly gesture towards this as a political act.

Laura Elrick is the author of SKINcerity (*Krupskaya*, 2003).

4¢
OVERNIGHT
RATE

ALL THIS
& MORE
AT

BINDING
&
LAMINATION



331 EAST 9th STREET
NEW YORK, NY 10003
Tel: 212 473 7833
Fax: 212 673 5248
10 AM - 6 PM Mon - Thurs
10 AM - 5 PM Fri

"It's Worth The Trip Down The Street!"

75¢
COLOR
COPIES

CD, AUDIO
& VIDEO
DUPLICATION

COPIES & MORE SINCE 1982!

GAIL SCOTT
MY PARIS

Dalkey Archive, 2003, \$12.95

In the translator's foreword to Walter Benjamin's *The Arcades Project*, Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin explain it was "the 'refuse' and 'détritus' of history, the half-concealed, variegated traces of the daily life of 'the collective,' that was to be the object of study, and with the aid of . . . the methods of the 19th-century ragpicker." In the final decade of the 20th century, the lesbian Anglo-Quebécois narrator of Gail Scott's novel finds a copy of *The Arcades Project* in the Paris flat she has won in a "leisure lottery" and comments of it, "Initially seeming huge pile of detritus. But—on looking closer. More like montage . . . A person could wander here for months," here being both the book and the city, and so she does, a mock-accidental late 20th-century ragpicker.

She tries not to look like a ragpicker relative to the "polished" Parisians, but she suffers eczema and loose ends. She repeats the mantra "To charm requiring anecdote," but she keeps a darkly funny diary, not of "the marvelous," but of synchronic/diachronic accretions of the "ordinary," collected via the paranoid/privileged gaze of the outsider/insider:

"Ordinary" when traveling. Often seeming in relief. Whereas "ordinary." Chez nous. By dint of repetition. Forever fading. Toward banality of background.

Self-mocking, ragging, the narrator claims to have "written nothing. In leisure lottery studio(,)", but Scott herself (as she writes in her acknowledgements) is holding a "critical dialogue with the ghost of Walter Benjamin," among other "great writers who left their mark on Paris," i.e. Baudelaire, Colette, Hugo, Proust. It is a dialogue which finds our own calamitous fin-de-siècle in both the "shiny" "smugness of the surface" and the "(C)old heinous breath. Blowing on privates. Through grille underneath." In spare, anti-lyrical, gerund-driven snippets "Full of objects. Posturing as subjects" (and constituting a grammatical dialogue with the ghost of Gertrude Stein), the "ordinary" bursts with the sociopolitical.

Patronne behind cash. Moving jowls. This way and that. Because foreigner taking too long. Getting money out. For simple pain, bread. I therefore quickly adding pâté aux prunes. To commande, order. At \$25 per pound: good for the blood. Now it's oui Madame. Non Madame. Au plaisir Madame. Behind her—employee. African-French. White assistant's hat. Asking Monsieur-le-patron for raise. Keeping his

dignity. Though manifestly furious. Because patron barely listening. Large family dog moving closer. Closer. Growling.

In a city where "image is 'de rigueur,'" as the economy tanks and the Rightists rise, etiquette does not mask power differentials of race, class and nationhood; it embodies them. The growling canine crystallizes the menace beneath, the ramifications of which are represented intermittently by televised images from the war in Bosnia, to which the narrator plays both politicized witness and anti-political spectator. Her willingness to implicate herself in the hegemonic (as when, ever fearful of deportation, she is reminded Canadians can get visas and notes "Now I feeling really silly.") divests the text of dogma and gives us the handle we need for reflection.

Indeed, despite the early-90s prevalence of AIDS and the decidedly European mass demonstrations, Scott's Paris feels disarmingly akin to wartime New York. Here: "Still hurrying. Past epoch's current galleries of desire. Chic small boutiques. Suffering capital's latest conspiracy. Globalization." Here: "No use trying to live here on less than \$4,000 a month. Mayor of Paris declaring." And here: "Plump young American with brushcut. Sitting on bench. Cop walking up. Vos papiers s'il vous plaît, your papers please. He saying. To young African on left. Vos papiers s'il vous plaît. He reiterating. To veiled woman. Carrying baby. On right. Not a word to brushcut." Read it and ruefully laugh, even as (and because) you feel the dog's hot breath panting at your heels.

Betsy Andrews's new chapbook, She-Devil, is available from Sardines Press in San Francisco.

CATHY PARK HONG
TRANSLATING MO'UM

Hanging Loose Press, 2002, \$13

A month ago in Moscow I was asked to take part in a radio discussion of poetry and bilingualism. Having no radio experience in the language I was born with, I quickly got silenced by the locals who proceeded to explain to me what being a bilingual poet is really like. When the microphone was finally thrust in my face, I said that the other side of the coin of being bilingual is being alingual, since all the linguistic idiosyncrasies that form the native speaker's invisible matrix for looking at the world appear visible to bilinguals, arbitrary and uncertain. In that sense, bilinguals have no native language at all.

Hong's *Translating Mo'um* reports on that aspect of the bilingual experience: of living in between languages, with the semi-erasure of one and the emotional insufficiency of

the other. "The mute girl with the baboon's face unlearned/ her vowels and cycled across the rugged phonetic map." Hong writes with her "palimpsest face haggard/ from revision"; her favorite subject is monstrosity; her favorite imagery is Janus-like duplicity: "Many-limbed children played in the park/ tulips were double-jointed." The word 'monster' comes from the Latin for 'to show.' Hong's many poems on Victorian circus freaks may be read allegorically as putting the irreducibly bilingual self on show within monolingual discourse, discourse that is colonialist not only historically, but also because it identifies its "formulas/ of doctors summing up freaks in taxidermic clinics" with those of nature and reason.

This is why *Translating Mo'um* is so pointedly about intranslatability. Korean words fill in spaces intentionally left blank in English sentences; when matched with English counterparts, as in the title poem, these counterparts do not themselves match. The speaker's erasing of one language and replacing it with another bears the resentment of forced conversion—there's something Marrano about it—and like a forced convert she secretly reshapes her new dispensation in her own image. It is hard not to read the author's own name in "many-limbed children played in the park"; it is hard not to read "tulips [...] double-jointed" as 'two lips.' The bilingual seeks aesthetic asylum in the doubling of the word, in the subterfuge of the pun.

Poetry is the language of the body; this is why the Romantics were certain you can write only in your mother tongue. Yet, when the mother tongue is overlaid by another, what language is native, which is the one your body articulates itself with? The speaker's body in *Translating Mo'um* becomes not only a sexual, but also a linguistic and a political battleground. "Hey saekshi, the American GIs cried to the Korean/ barmaids, pronouncing saekshi 'sexy'; "I say these words in your ear, which make you climax; // afterwards you ask me for their translations. I tell you it's a secret." But it's not as if the body's language is Korean: "I don't know the Korean word for sex." Rather, the bilingual body speaks both of its languages alternately as native and foreign, and it is through the 'foreign' mode that it gains access to the erotics proper to each. The erotics of Hong's English will be recognized in the private, postlapsarian paradise of second language learners as those of testing a tongue with a tongue.

Eugene Ostachevsky is editing an anthology of Russian absurdist poetry of the OBERIU group.

YEDDA MORRISON

CROP

Kelsey St. Press, 2003, \$11

“a rash spreads up it fur and cleavage coated or cream filled consummate volition

fills with suspended articulate fingers does it mention nest of charred hapless starlings its briar patch with corresponding rabbits to pick one's own

it girl with multiple blow up cherries produced in plastic and selling in packs come

alongside it let it be care for and inconsequential fruitlings dashed against mirror props

sloppy its oozing inside where a pipe expelling steam is not invented by the

leisure of its poem life rather an ignition of deviance narrow knife entry pronouncing she divisible non-multiplying violence....”

Take that, world!

Yedda Morrison's *CROP* does something, fueled by fury, the wrong rage at the wrong time—necessarily inappropriate and urgent. The work is motivated by a commitment to writing that has social and political implications, orchestrated by a sharp and reflexive intellect that allows for the unexpected and its attending contradictions. In short, *CROP* kicks ass!

Morrison does not intend *CROP* for an exclusive few. She is taking on questions about production and reproduction, while recasting the “battle of sexes” into a world where only a few can self-identify consistently. At the same time, she is uncovering and simultaneously unraveling the process of oppression and subjugation. The work enacts a powerful critique of economic systems and institutions from a pointedly feminist position. She does this all with her own distinctive kind of humor, word-working, and play that allows experience to divide and multiply the questions at hand.

“dolly, my porcelain cell life, is physically crushed. one entrail escapes toward the neon exit, fully reproducible. the man's uterus is presented on a decorative platter. I breast for him. I breast for dolly who is a breast, my units reproduced and floating in the even pink vat, wobbly white cups, inverted. for dolly.”

Morrison herself has been doing work that contributes significantly to a variety of communities. As a writer, teacher, editor and curator, she has played an invaluable role in a range of Bay Area artistic and political communities, involving countless people while forging relationships between individuals and groups in dynamic and generative conversations.

“By writing this I mean not to produce / literature as enough intention / a letter syndrome / nor that hermetics had taken our place / had done its work in theory, is / a national franchise / to begin / as insertion buckle / had done formidable drainage, had taken our place / when was it and now was not so / socially embedded”

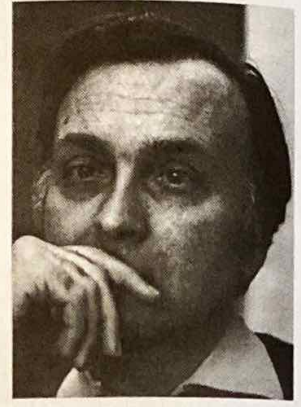
Her dazzling disconnects un-nerve language itself; these fast paced moves and gestures push the writing and the reader. *CROP* begins with a fury, fury as a valid political response, a stance and a force, active, doing, making, composing and not listening to the rules, a rage directed at our historical moment and conditions. It is predawn, dark, damp, cold, not knowing, asking the reader to begin, wet with blood, piss and cherry juice. Something will and does grow here.

In the pee holes, blooded, dirty, plastic, and heightened, “in function” an economy of ins and outs, inseparable from the body, even if the body is in parts, or because it has become just that: parts. In its in-function out comes a layering of “a” over “b”, numbered, boxes, hours, worker num-

Renaissance Men



John Donne
(1572-1631)



Robert Duncan
(1906-1988)

Poetry is a Perpetual Rebirth of the Imagination

THE NEW COLLEGE POETICS PROGRAM

MA POETICS | MFA POETICS AND WRITING

Reading Poetry in Historical Context | Innovative Writing
Seminars and Workshops | Core Faculty Mentors and Lively
Peers | Printing, Publishing, Readings, Talks, Zines

SPRING 2003: RENAISSANCES

Tom Clark

Power, Paradox, & Thought-Play:
English Renaissance Lyric, Wyatt to Marvell

Adam Cornford

The Birth of the Modern, 1530-1660 and Shakespeares

Joanne Kyger

The San Francisco Renaissance

David Meltzer

The Prophetic

Now accepting applications for Spring 2003 & Fall 2004
415-437-3460



www.newcollege.edu/poetics

Accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.
Financial aid is available for students who qualify.

766 VALENCIA STREET, SAN FRANCISCO

bers and numbered—never at full value, or fully valued, and it is endlessly repeating, throwing into question progress itself as a positive goal.

As my running list of body parts touched, written, referred to in the text has run out of space, and more keep coming, (not to mention all the animals and their attending parts), I realize that Morrison has been keeping count, taking in account, has accounted for so many of the struggles. I repeatedly am returned to this line from the section entitled, "The Tissue Commission."

"how / bodies / boil / down / to / purpose"

Morrison's writing asks difficult questions and offers not answers but a set of strategies for emancipatory actions, for both the activist and artist, alike.

Jocelyn Saldenberg is the author of *Mortal City* and CUSP; Negativity is forthcoming from *Atelos*.

MERRILL GILFILLAN

RIVERS & BIRDS

Johnson Books, 2003, \$14

Merrill Gilfillan writes a prose that glows alabaster green. It refracts, it whistles across your ear, it wafes the room with jasmine and frying scrapple, it goofs.

A lodging in Cheyenne "called, with breathtaking understatement, the Interocean Hotel" (*Magpie Rising*). And: "I was, to put it mildly, asleep in Texas" (poem from *Light Years*). (Parenthetical elements, terse.)

And: this new book, where the touring author notes that, nearby, "an occasional weather-blistered duck blind offshore bobbed in the steady chop." Blue jays intone "consolingly," "a conversation of high vocabulary and enormous range, even intellectual content, from wheedle to lullaby, mutter to scuttlebutt, query to jeer." And at times in winter, a guy needs an antidote for "the dark of the year, when you turn the key in the house door and glance over your shoulder, noticing uneasily the night falling at 4:20 in the afternoon"—needs "to dream something up, to rally." And who knows, "the ultimate heart-of-winter outing—something to flush the spirit and help lubricate the deep-winter pivot—might be the trip up to Georgetown."

When somebody writes like that, a talisman is bestowed on the reader, a charm of great potency that animates you for a span of time, sometimes a long one. Pound used the term "grace," a lot, which I hesitate to do. But I'm pretty sure the meaning is the same.

Rivers & Birds is Gilfillan's sixth prose book and his fourth work of landscape observation. It strikes me as the most ambitious since the first one, *Magpie Rising* (and if you don't know his poems, I suggest seeking them immediately).

The landscape books all in some way issue from the same authorial itinerancy and a particular mode of less-than-grand touring. It reminds you of Douglas Woolf and his characters (the ones who heat TV dinners in Route 66 motels atop warm, vacuum-tube-powered television sets); there's a succession of automobiles and dining is often from a can heated on the exhaust manifold.

A somewhat untethered tourer, at a sane remove from the surrounding society, which is rather seldom heard from. A tourer who moves with the lightness and unpredictability of a Bob Wills tumbleweed.

If you read this book, you will be reading about birds, those ineluctable landscape floaters about whom Gilfillan seems to know everything. In *Rivers & Birds*, he sometimes even hangs out with other "birders."

But the human and human-made environment do get evoked as well, in much the dry and blithe way that they pass through *Magpie Rising*. The Black Hills are clouded with "survivalist practitioners, probably of the gaming, paintball-wars variety, out on playful maneuvers, tracking an 'enemy' squad to wage make-believe battle in a craggy arroyo." (Yeah, that's what's out there.) Or: apple picking with kindredly margin-dwelling migrant workers in the '70s; among them a "scowling drinker with a disorienting squint" and a scar across his throat. The drinker works alongside his son—"natural growling authorities on western American fruit harvests, they found the local wages insulting, and they didn't care for apples to boot." (A fleeting object lesson in how to end a sentence.)

In a letter to administrators of the Deerfield Summer School, Henry James advised, "Tell the ladies and gentlemen, the ingenious inquirers, to consider life directly and closely, and not to be put off with mean and puerile falsities, and to be conscientious about it."

Gilfillan is that kind of observer.

Stephen Emerson, of Oakland, California, is the author of *The Wife and Neighbors*.

LAURA ELRICK

SKINCERITY

Krupskaya, 2003, \$11

One of the compelling byproducts of *appropriation* and *sampling* in new poetry is the equalizing effect it has on its source materials. Campaign ads, the English of new language learners, suburban youth flashes, and 19th-century land expansion proposals might all enjoy a liberated equality as they are lifted into their new context. This current tendency in poetry, then, forces an intriguing position of the author herself as she takes a regular seat among the other sources. The author's *presence* or *personality* or *subjectivity* is neither embraced nor abnegated but rather integrated as part of the larger canvas of appropriation.

The nine poems of *skincerity* each bring to the table new but overlapping sources, but, in part, what distinguishes these poems is how the direct address is accomplished through appropriation. What appears as Elrick's "own" response is often one among many, with great range in the irony-to-sincerity spectrum. In fact, the poems moves between sincerity and irony so naturally that the blur feels nearly organic:

Colorado, that is. There's me at eighteen
just pussifying there on the blacktop.

Tender terror...

... that is, rations my 'Colorado'

Elrick uses poetic forms in much the same way as the sources. The opening lines of the book have a heightened awareness of the use of the lyric—problematized, honed, and historicized:

The petroleum barons also
grow randy towards evening

The repetition of *r*, *o*, and *l* sounds roll out the poem in a musicality we easily recognize as lyrical. Yet, the assertion of the couplet—the agitated oil magnates—creates one of the conflicts that will set the tone for the book. Another example of this intersection is obvious in the title poem, where Elrick pits some unconventional found language against an eloquent, appropriated chunk of Samuel Butler's *Erewhon*, 1871:

St.
Mark's
Book
shop

31 THIRD AVENUE
NEW YORK, NEW YORK

10003

www.stmarksbookshop.com

PHONE

(212) 260 7853

I WAS ALARMED LEST I SHOULD BE
MADE AN OBJECT OF CURIOSITY
OR DISLIKE....

Compare to:

JUST THE OTHER DAY MY QUEENS
KAREN COME ON OVER FROM BED-
STUY. WE WAS REAL HAVING A
HARD TIME SEE. I MEAN HER-MAN
AND ME-MAN WAS OF DIFFERENT
AND WE CAN SAY PERTY SURE AS
THOUGH NEITHER WAS EASILY TO
BE EMPLOYED AT SOME UNI...

While Elrick's sources may demonstrate the kind of equality that sampling encourages, the winners and losers of the *language-equals-power* game are not equal. Throughout *sKincerity* there are appropriated pieces of other English borrowed from a class of disenfranchised language-learners and immigrant workers, or, as the author states in the acknowledgements: "unsuitable interpreters." In the poem "sKincerity," Elrick writes: "Aks and you might/receive." Or you might not. This is a far cry from: *Ask and ye shall receive*. What becomes increasingly clear is that the hierarchy of privilege mirrors that of decorous language in a country that says *all* (read: *few*) are given opportunity. This straightforwardly dark but compassionate conclusion is gathered in Elrick's final poem of the book, "Why I Am Not A Poetrist":

And anyway
I'm not free
so why should I
sound
that way—

Elrick reminds us that one doesn't have to be a poet in order to be radically transformed by the choices one makes about language, and/or the choices that are made for one:

She looked across
the street and the tears
fspell
down

Laura Elrick's *sKincerity* is firmly in dialogue with several other poets of her generation who sample from appropriated sources in order to weave a new social fabric of address and response, i.e. Juliana Spahr, Brian Kim Stefans, Kim Rosenfield, Kristin Prevallet, Carol Mirakove, and many others. It stands as a significant contribution to a central new development in American poetry. It is an extraordinary read in many ways—one of which is how it welds sincerity and critical distance to frame both the social and the personal, in other words: *sKincerity*.

The third book of Robert Fitterman's long poem, Metropolis 30: The Decline and Fall Of The Roman Empire, is forthcoming from Edge Books.

KARI EDWARDS IDUNA

O Books, 2003, \$12

To read this book is to start upside down, backwards, through, towards, at a slant and between. This is because graphic elements work to suspend the text at various dimensions in space simultaneously. This is familiar consideration for a painter—edwards's original medium was painting. On most pages in *iduna* there is a poem typeset traditionally—that is, hanging from the top of the page and finding its culmination somewhere lower on the page, but worked between, around and through these poems are additional outcroppings and layerings of text. Reminiscent of Jenny Holtzer's work, a band of continuous text happens at the top and bottom of each page. Pumped-up scale carries this crosscurrent poem across the center of the page, skipping consecutive pages, but moving serially until it dissipates toward the *beginning* of the book, which is only if one is accustomed to reading from left to right. Layered in a push-pull between foreground and background and situated on the margins of each page are blown-up and stylized words and fragments. Colliding and merging with these words are cartoonish outlines of letters and shapes resembling letters twirling through a vortex. English is the predominant language but there are smatterings of Latin and German. Throughout, edwards has engulfed the page with the shadow and line of language coming in and out of being.

Linearity can't hold up in edwards's centrifugal spirit. All definitions falter hereinto. A fecund transitionalism is at hand; language, made up of human gesture (self-reflexive and so forth)—catalytic desire is surging—sets forth continual motions, which dissolve the shunting of potentiality, the caging of time, emblems of person wrapped tight in constriction, like gender. For edwards, time is one of the casualties of the capitalistic system, having been commodified, as gender has. No

Gertrude Stein Fortune Cookies

Wit and Wisdom of
The Mother of Us All

for souvenirs or gifts for parties

\$5 for a package of 6
+ shipping

Order at Ochiishi@aol.com

longer are the bountiful possibilities for the socially relational held in abeyance: this text resists determination, thus the resulting cacophony. A poem titled "1X2" beats out this rhythm:

and being there they said, and being being
they said, and being more there more
abstract more pain more attachments, more
axial, more positional, more deposits in my
pain box. to know what, who, how, this and
this, inner or outer, along the surface, or on
the edge of the rim, in gradient intensities,
in obscure anywhere, ascending cross-
country retrograde parallax, triplex cad-
mium, gold ultramarine, patina hyperbola,
give me a fortune cookie, a transverse hemi-
hedral, a nowhere that is everywhere.

The unruliness of these literal, physical, and spatial dimensions coming out of exile makes for a percussive mix where the aim is not mastery over the text. *iduna* seems to have been generated out of a communal rather than a proprietary urge—textual advocacy for an egalitarian condition. Her manifestation rallies against the troubling ever-presence of auto-da-fé. From "send back the stamp":

like a taste conduit half that and a
sentence that soft highly dynamic
especially that pen then another semblance
a comment or possible cutbacks...

Coils of implication re: media speak and theory tropes threaten to strangulate subtle, fecund personal meanings, but edwards graphs these in, appropriating their self-generating mechanisms, therefore overriding any insistence on compartmentalization and concretization—a chance for deviation, change, and transformation emerges, flourishes. The self becomes the invasion of all texts, all mental heat (generated by friction), all that is inimical, all the combined energy each system employs surges here, generatively. The self is that host.

Brenda Iijima's Around Sea is just out from O Books. She is the publisher of Portable Press at Yo-Yo Labs. □

COMING SPRING 2004

Tulips

A Charles North &
Trevor Winkfield
Collaboration

Phylum Press

69 Clark St 2R

New Haven, CT, 06511

phylumpress@hotmail.com

www.phylumpress.com

ALL AROUND WHAT EMPTIES OUT

Linh Dinh
Subpress/a'a arts, 2003, TK

The role of the real at the heart of the surreal; the sacred emerging from the profane; the logic of a large intestine: to write *All Around What Empties Out*, Linh Dinh must have ingested the holy waters flowing through the meat-packer's gutter and survived. This is a book where the heart of wisdom is a mentality occupied by a pack of K-9 dogs—it bites absolute truths and revels in the pieces left behind. Somewhere in this book is the I-Ching, the astrologer's chart, the farmer's almanac, the Book of Questions. There are traces of the Bhagavad-Gita, the Tibetan Book of the Dead, the chronicles of the Buddha. Linh Dinh doesn't reveal his sources, but his language is familiar—he's passing along crazy wisdom in a tone that seems so familiar, even though what is actually being said will be jarring to truth-seekers:

A woman is folded then stuffed into an envelope only to wake up the next day inside a cardboard suitcase.

Why does the blinking man throw screaming knives at a confiding woman?

A hundred maidens are equal to one peacock all teetering on two disappointed wheels.

...

All things clever or difficult are intended to amuse, specifically a rapid movement of the hand or the mind to generate a sequence of brief illusions.

His logic is an anti-logic in which the art of sacrilege presents its own system of belief. This is not to say that there are any supreme or un-supreme beings in this praxis; this is certainly not to say that there are any discernible, essential, truths. Dinh assumes an assured tone and writes through the allegorical/parable tradition. In seeming to import words of wisdom, his poems build and build, creating X-treme mind movies ("Once I saw a young mother blow hot air rhythmically into her infant son's asshole hoping to cure him of something"); evoking profundity in the juxtaposition of beer and sacred teachers.

I drank two beers and ate a pretzel.
Two Mozarts flank me on both sides.
Across the room is the Dalai Lama.

His immaculate head has been spitshined.

How many more times must I say this.
Nowhere but here can it matter.

Stuart Henley has done a wonderfully unique design for this book (polka dots on every page, a graph to mark the page num-

bers, a horseshoe pattern that is on the cover and replicates itself throughout the book). One can actually do a reading through the form of the design—an amazing feat of the yin/yang balance between form and content. The horseshoe pattern on the cover is actually cut out of a photograph of what appears to be the corner of a white tile bathroom. The title of the book, *All Around What Empties Out*, is certainly a spinoff of the Tao te Ching ("It is not the clay the potter throws, which gives the pot its usefulness, but the space within the shape, from which the pot is made."). So what is the space within that empties out of a bathroom? What's been cut out of the photograph? The toilet pot? Some gross towels heaped in the corner? Or nothing at all? So the poems in the book, like the horseshoe, are themselves forms that exist in the space around what has been emptied out: the space left by the commodification of spirituality; the erasure of singular truths from postmodernity; by the disconnect between productivity and a worker's health. Whatever it is that is left out, something is definitely left behind: "an intermittent drunken sort of laughter swirling around even when there's no one around."

Kristin Prevallet is the author of Scratch Sides.

New Poetry Titles from Omnidawn • www.omnidawn.com

Distributed by Small Press Distribution • 800-869-7553 • 510-524-1668 • www.spdbooks.org

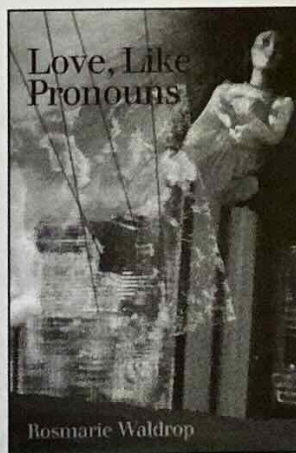


The Fatalist LYN HEJINIAN

\$12.95 1-890650-12-9

★ One of *The Village Voice's* ★
"Our 25 Favorite Books of 2003"

"...beautiful sentences in
startling succession."
— *Publishers Weekly*

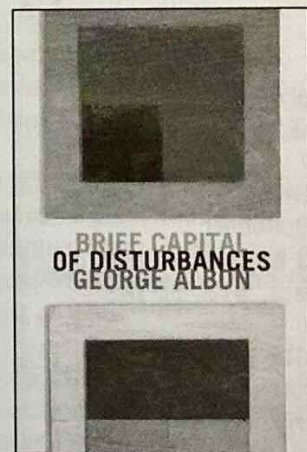


Love, Like Pronouns ROSMARIE WALDROP

\$12.95 1-890650-14-5

"Her verse swerves, varies, comes
back to itself, and ... delights in
a very human quirkiness."
— *Poetry Project Newsletter*

OMNIDAWN®



Brief Capital of Disturbances GEORGE ALBON

\$12.95 1-890650-13-7

"...keen observations, spare
style, and thoughtful use of
understated formal strategies..."
— Guy Bennett
The New Review of Literature

BOOKS RECEIVED

BOOKS AND CDS

KENTUCKY BLUES

David Amram & Ron Whitehead
Heaven Audio, CD

THE SELF-DISEMBLED MAN:

SELECTED LATER POEMS OF
GUILLAUME APOLLINAIRE
Translated by Donal Revell
Wesleyan U. Press, \$15.95, 152 pgs.

THE SWEET SINGER OF MODERNISM & OTHER ART WRITINGS 1985-2003

Bill Berkson
Qua Books, 266 pgs.

THE LETTERS OF ROBERT
DUNCAN AND DENISE LEVERTOV
Robert J. Berthoff & Albert Gelpi, eds.
Stanford University Press, \$39.95,
857 pgs.

NETS

Jen Bervin
Ugly Duckling Press, \$10, 150 pgs.

TAO DROPS, I CHANGE

Steve Carll & Bill Marsh
Bathysphere Press/subpress, \$12

BORN 2

Allison Cobb
Chax Press, \$16, 99 pgs.

NOTEBOOKS 1956-1978

Danielle Collobert
Translated by Norma Cole
Litmus Press, \$12, 86 pgs.

RETURN RECEIPT

William Corbett
Drawings by John King
63 pgs.

PASSING WORLD PICTURES

Valerie Coulton
Apogee Press, \$12.95, 62 pgs.

LITERATURE NATION

Maria Damon and mIEKAL aND
Potes and Poets Press, 85 pgs.

METROPOLIS 16-29

Robert Fitterman
Coach House Press, \$14.95, 124 pgs.

A NEW THEORY FOR AMERICAN POETRY: DEMOCRACY, THE ENVIRONMENT, AND THE FUTURE OF IMAGINATION

Angus Fletcher
Harvard University Press, \$29.95,
336 pgs.

GHOST GIRL

Amy Gerstler
Penguin Poets, \$16, 67 pgs.

ANATMAN, PUMPKIN SEED, ALGORITHM

Loss Pequeño Glazier
Salt Publishing, TK, 100 pgs.

PRIVATE LEMONADE

John Godfrey
Adventures in Poetry, \$12.50, 100 pgs.

THE FREQUENCIES

Noah Eli Gordon
Tougher Disguises, \$12, 88 pgs.

LOST AND FOUND

Michael Gottlieb
Roof Books, \$11.95, 73 pgs.

AROUND SEA

Brenda Iijima
O Books, \$12, 103 pgs.

BLACK DOG SONGS

Lisa Jarnot
Flood Editions, \$13, 55 pgs.

MOUNTAIN R

Jacques Jouet
Translated by Brian Evenson
Dalkey Archive Press, \$12.95, 143
pgs

CAPRICCI

Duncan McNaughton
Blue Millennium Press, 155 pgs.

DAYBOOKS: 1970-1972

Jonas Mekas
Translated by Vyt Bakaitis

Portable Press at Yo-Yo Labs, \$13

POEMS FROM THE PRISON DIARY OF HO CHI MINH

Translated by Steve Bradbury
Tinfish Press, \$10, 33 pgs.

THE ESSENTIAL NERUDA

Pablo Neruda
City Lights Publishers, \$16.95,
234 pgs.

ARRONDISSEMENTS

Douglas Oliver
Edited by Alice Notley
Salt, \$16.95, 172 pgs.

FIFTY DROPS OF BLOOD

Dmitri Alexandrovich Prigov
Translated by Christopher Mattison
Ugly Duckling Presse, \$8, 108 pgs.

FURTHERANCE

J.H. Prynne
The Figures, \$14, 108 pgs.

OCCASIONAL WORK AND SEVEN WALKS FROM THE OFFICE FOR SOFT ARCHITECTURE

Lisa Robertson
Clear Cut Press, TK, 274 pgs.

POKER

Tomaz Salamun
Ugly Duckling Presse, Eastern
European Poets Series #3, \$10

VÉRITÉ

Michael Scharf
/ubu editions, 2002, www.ubu.com

A SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY: MEMOIRS, 1917-1922

Viktor Shklovsky
Dalkey Archive Press, \$13.95, 305
pgs.

MUSIC OR HONESTY

Rod Smith
Roof Books, \$12.95, 94 pgs.

CHANTRY

Elizabeth Treadwell
Chax Press, \$16, 95 pgs.

STRUCTURES OF FEELING
Hung Q. Tu
Krupskaya, \$11, 107 pgs.

DRAWING ON THE WALL
Harriet Zinnes
Marsh Hawk Press, \$12.50, 88 pgs.

THE WRITING OF GUILLAUME
APOLLINAIRE
Louis Zukofsky
Wesleyan University Press, \$24.95,
243 pgs.

MAGAZINES

ECOPOETICS NO. 3
106 Huntington Ave., Buffalo, NY
14214. Work by Alice Notley, Tom
Raworth, Kaia Sand, and others.
\$7 one issue; \$25 four issue sub-
scription. Printed on recycled paper
with covers on tree-free kenaf
poppy-seed paper.

LUNGFULL! NO. 13
Edited by Brendan Lorber,
www.lungfull.org. Work by Edmund
Berrigan, Jaime Manrique and oth-
ers. \$8.95 for one issue; \$17.90
for two.

AMERICAN LETTERS &
COMMENTARY
www.amletters.org. Work by
Rosmarie Waldrop, Cole Swenson,
Linh Dinh, and others. \$8.00 for
one issue.

AUFGABE
www.durationpress.com/litmus-
press/aufgabe/. Work by Ange
Mlinko, Craig Watson, and others.
\$12 for one issue, \$20 for two
issues.

FIVE FINGERS REVIEW
jrobles@aaahawk.com. Lee Ann
Brown, Peter Gizzi, Fannie Howe
and others. \$12 for one issue, \$20
for two issues.

FO A RM 2
fo_a_rm@yahoo.com. Work by
André Spears, Michael Basinski, and

others. \$14 for year's subscription.

TALISMAN #27
P.O. Box 3157, Jersey City, NJ
07303-3157. A selection of work
by contemporary Slovenian poets.
\$15 for year's subscription.

TINY PRESSES

ABACUS, ISSUE #153
"Fallen Left Behind *Forms for
Elegy*" by Kristin Prevallet
ABACUS, ISSUE #154
"Internal Letters" by
Andrew Mossin
Edited by Dan Featherston, Editor,
P.O. Box 42696, Tucson, AZ
85733-2696.

THE DOOR, SO THAT NOW
Steve Benson
Tolling Elves 13, 9 The Parade,
Upper Brockley Rd., London SE4
1SX. Folded poem with art by
Steve Dickson.

BIG SCREAM 42
Winter/Spring 2004, 30th anniver-
sary issue side-stapled magazine,
2782 Dixie SW, Grandville, MI,
49418, Antler, Andy Clausen, Eliot
Katz, David Cope and others.

POEM
Miles Champion
Tolling Elves 15, 9 The Parade,
Upper Brockley Rd., London SE4
1SX. Folded poem with drawings by
Trevor Winkfield.

MY UNDERSTANDING
Stephen Clair
Pressed Wafer, 9 Columbus Square,
Boston, MA 02116, \$5. Chapbook.

CELL
Allison Cobb
Portable Press at Yo-Yo Labs & Other
Publications, 596 Bergen St.,
Brooklyn, NY 11238, \$6, Chapbook.

WAITING FOR IOWA
Heather Lee Cooper
Waitingforiowa@yahoo.com. Self-

published chapbook.

MUSCLE MEMORY
Brett Evans
Fell Swoop, The All Bohemian
Review, 3003 Ponco De Leon St.,
New Orleans, LA 70119

BLOCKHEAD
Jamey Jones
A brown boke series, 4185 Ciudad
Drive, Pensacola, FL 32504, small
chapbook.

THE 60'S AND 70'S FROM THE
THEORY OF SUBJECTIVITY IN
MOBY DICK
Deborah Meadows
Tinfish Press, tinfishpress.com.
Chapbook. \$10.

RADIO BEACH
Kevin Opstedal
Pelican Press, P.O. Box 5640, San
Mateo, CA 94402, \$5. Chapbook.

METROPOLITAN BIRD CULTURE
Becky Peterson
Bigfan Press, bigfanpress.com.
Chapbook.

NO GUNS NO DURIAN
Susan M. Schultz
Tinfish Press, tinfishpress.com.
Chapbook. \$7.

POST 9/11
Herschel Silverman
Butcher Shop Press, butchershop-
press@hotmail.com. Chapbook, edi-
tion of 150.

SLEEPING FISH
www.sleepingfish.net., side-stapled,
Jukka-Pekka Kervinen, W. B. Keckler,
Spencer Selby, Vernon Frazer.

THINGS OF EACH POSSIBLE
RELATION HASHING AGAINST
ONE ANOTHER
Juliana Spahr
Palm Press, www.palmpress.org.
Cover is original print on handmade
gampi paper by Shuzo Uemoto.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION & FORM

YES, I wish to become a member of The Poetry Project. Here is my membership gift of:

\$50 \$85 \$125 \$250 \$500 \$1000 I do not wish to join at this time but here is my contribution of \$ _____.

(For your gift of \$25 or more you'll receive a year's subscription to *The Poetry Project Newsletter*.)

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

*NOTE: Please make all checks payable to The Poetry Project. Detach this page and mail to: **THE POETRY PROJECT, C/O ST. MARK'S CHURCH, 131 EAST 10TH STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10003**

YOUR GIFT ENTITLES YOU TO THESE MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP [\$50]

- *Discounted* admission for a year to all regularly scheduled and special Poetry Project events.
- A year's subscription to *The Poetry Project Newsletter*.
- Substantial savings on workshops offered at the Project.
- Priority discounted admission to all special events.

SUPPORTING MEMBERSHIP [\$85]

- *Free* admission to all regularly scheduled Poetry Project events.
- *Plus* all other benefits above.

SUSTAINING MEMBERSHIP [\$125]

- *Free* admission to all regularly scheduled Poetry Project events for you and a guest.
- A *free* subscription to *The World*, the Project's literary magazine.
- *Plus* all other benefits above.

DONOR MEMBERSHIP [\$250]

- All of the above! *PLUS*
- *FREE* admission to designated special events, including the annual New Year's Day Marathon Reading featuring over 100 poets and performers.
- *FREE* limited-edition broadside: *The Vermont Notebook* memorial broadside, by John Ashbery and Joe Brainard, 16 x 19 inches, edition of 125, signed by John Ashbery.

BENEFACTOR MEMBERSHIP [\$500]

- All of the Donor-level membership benefits! *PLUS*
- All 2003-2004 Poetry Project publications.
- A 20% discount on the purchase of any Poetry Project print (in addition to the Ashbery/Brainard broadside)
- Grateful public acknowledgment.

PATRON MEMBERSHIP [\$1000]

- All off the Donor-level membership benefits! *PLUS*
- All 2003-2004 Poetry Project publications.
- Your choice of any Poetry Project print (in addition to the Ashbery/Brainard broadside)
- Grateful public acknowledgment.

NEW MEMBERS AND RECENT CONTRIBUTORS: Lloyd Addison, Jack Anderson, John Ashbery, Stephen Baraban, Harriet Barlow, Margaret Bauer, Nick Bender, Dianne Benson, Bill Berkson & Constance Lewallen, Alan Bernheimer, Charles Bernstein & Susan Bee, Jen Bervin, Lindsay Blatt, Rachel Blau DuPlessis, Jean T. Bleich, Lois Bohevesky, Michael Brownstein, Helene Burgess, Marie Carter, Jennifer Chand, Mike & Alice Cincotta, Laura A. Ciruolo, Steve Clay & Julie Harrison, Theodate Coates, Allison Cobb & Jennifer Coleman, Clark Coolidge, Lydia Cortes, Douglas Crase, Jordan Davis, Contessa Davis, Michel de Konkoly Thege, Ray DeJesus, Terence Diggory, John Mercuri Dooley, Douglas Dunn, kari edwards, David Elsassser, Shell Fischer, Catherine Fletcher, Sesshu Foster, Kevin Frey, Michael Friedman & Dianne Perry, Joanna Fuhrman, Christopher Funkhouser, Elaina Ganim, Brina Gehry, Christine Hamm, Irene Han, Dr. Grace G. Herman, Lynne Hjelmgaard, Erica Hunt, Brenda Iijima, Phil Johnson, Boni Joi, James R. Jones, Larry Jones, A.C. Kaiser, Howard Kanovitz, Samuel Kaplan, Nathan Kernan, Mary & Dave Kite, April Koester, Chris Kraus, Denise LaCongo, Susan Landers & Natasha Dwyer, David Larsen, Barney Latimer, John Latta, Ed Lawler, Rose Lesniak, Lois E. Lowenstein, Lilla Lyon, John Martin & Michelle Filshie, Nancy McCain-Morneau, Laura McCandlish, Duncan McNaughton, Sharon Mesmer, K. Mets, Honor Moore, Barbara Moore, Thurston Moore & Kim Gordon, Bill Morgan, Fred Moten, Jess Mynes, Yoho Myrvaagnes, Dael Orlandersmith, Bob Perelman & Francie Shaw, Marjorie Perloff, Bob Phillips, Luciana Polney, Jonathan D. Rabinowitz, India Radfar, Karin Randolph, Jean Rigg, Kit Robinson, Bob Rosenthal & Rochelle Kraut, Hector Hugo Ruizdiaz, Jeanette Sanger, Leslie Scalapino, Myra Shapiro, Rachel Shattuck, Christine Shook, Herschel Silverman, Rick Snyder, Michele Madigan Somerville, Kish Song Bear, Juliana Spahr, Jill Stengel & Andy Hilliard, Ann Stephenson, Rebecca Stoddard, Tony Towle, Gail Tuch, Lourdes Vazquez, Craig Watson, David Wechsler, Marjorie Welish, Susan Wheeler, D.W. Wright, Deborah Wye, Brian Young, Lila Zemborain, and Larry Zirlin (as of 3/12/04).

THE POETRY PROJECT

ST. MARK'S CHURCH IN-THE-BOWERY
131 EAST 10TH STREET
NEW YORK, NY 10003

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED
RETURN POSTAGE GUARANTEED

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
NEW YORK, NY
PERMIT NO. 7021