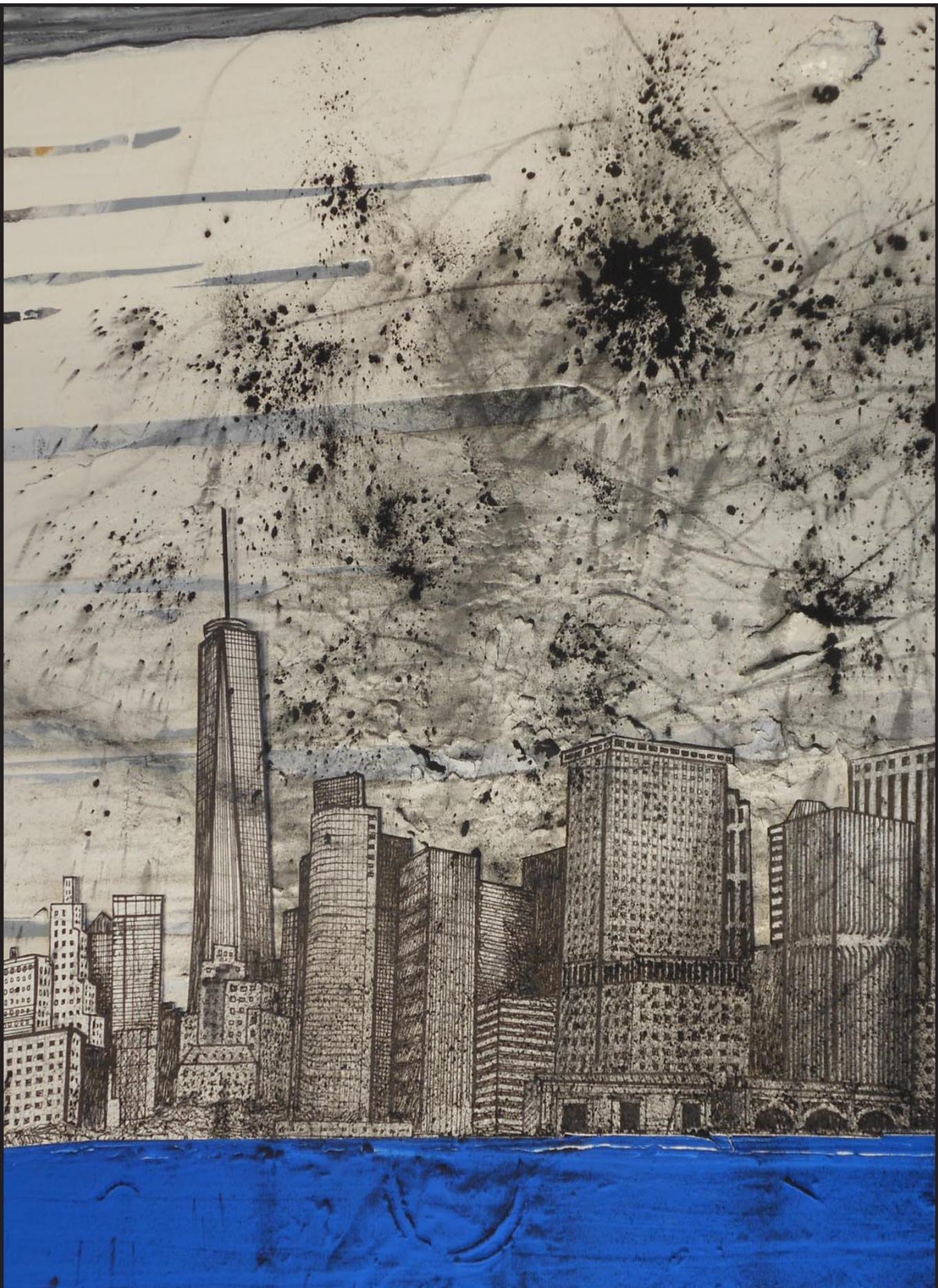


# THE POETRY PROJECT

NEWS LETTER  
OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2015



ISSUE  
# 244

# POETRY PROJECT NEWSLETTER OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2015

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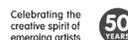
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poetry  
project*

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*Cover image: Jonathan Allen. Video still from On Governors Island, a collaboration between visual artist Jonathan Allen and poet Laura Henriksen, 1:26, 2015*

## ***Letter from the Director***



The Poetry Project is preparing to celebrate a landmark year next season. The 2016-17 season will be the 50th anniversary. Poet-run and still vital, and with our archives at the Library of Congress! Whoever decided the Project needed to be staffed by working poets was a genius. Poets are probably the only people who would work so hard, often by the seat of our pants, to maintain this location for the action of poets reading their work to audiences. I'm using the word location versus site as preferred by Patricia Spears Jones for being more fluid. No seasoned organization can take its relevance or vitality for granted. One rooted in live public readings of innovative poetry needs to understand how to be alive in real time.

The Poetry Project, of course, started small, local, amongst friends and associates and steadily it built many bridges to get to all the places it needed to get to. The metaphor of “bridging” may be well-worn, but it describes a particular kind of work—making contact with your materials, sweating, carrying yourself across, then meeting “others” and discovering, or unearthing.

Historically, there are times when the Project did this more and less, but dialogue and inquiry have always been valued highly. The Project's staff works to extend the best moments in the past into a sustained reality, now and into coming decades.

The poets we are featuring this season excite me so much I get chills looking at everyone's names listed together on the calendar. Our curatorial team is deeply engaged, knowledgeable and big-hearted (see their statements on page 5), and I hope you'll support them by attending a reading by a poet who is new to you as well as readings by poets you already love.

We are poets living in a country that refuses to face its failures. The ills of racism, police brutality, violence against the LGBT community, especially now, trans women of color, gender equity and equality in general are problems poets are well equipped to engage and challenge each other and the public with through invigorating language and performance. Audre Lorde says it beautifully in the beginning of the documentary *The Berlin Years*: "poetry is the most subversive use of language that there is because it attempts to bring about change by altering people's feelings."

How do we "make the world safe for poetry" (Anne Waldman), and "what is the primary duty of repair?" (Akilah Oliver). These questions guide us, as does the image of the uncompromising poet, the new poem in her hands, and the audience that has gathered to really listen.

-Stacy Szymaszek

## *Letter from Simone White*

---

Summer is long. It begins with an infant and deadline and it ends with a toddler and a deadline. Such is the way of the working mother/poet— always was, always will be. But there's something new at The Poetry Project, for me and for you.

I begin this season as The Project's first ever Program Director. I'll continue to curate and host Wednesday Nights: the general look and feel of my presence will be no different. But this shift— from part- to full-, less to more— offers me a chance to reflect on what's become a pretty long association with The Project. How and why and by what fortunes, good and bad... Here is also a chance to thank Stacy Szymaszek, who has shared her wickedly joyful, deep and faithful sense of poetry with me for more than ten years. Thanks, Stacy, for your trust and friendship, as you, and steadiness, as Director, without which I couldn't do a thing here. Because the thing is, programming at The Poetry Project isn't administration (although we do our share): it's making a display of certain kind of hope for how poetry can get written and received. Stacy and I are in aesthetic accord surprisingly often, but when we aren't, we reason about what course would be best for our audience: this is an ego-free zone.

And because the world has changed. The Poetry Project is a small but important part of a larger world inside a larger world. I, like every poet writing today, feel the small and large effects of a contemporary wakefulness about race, gender, violence and longing for new kinds of understanding and peace. We're thinking about what's happening out there/in here. We're really thinking.

-Simone White (Program Director)

### **ABOUT POETRY PROJECT READINGS**

While the boundaries between each of the Project's reading series are permeable, in general, the weekly Wednesday Night Reading Series features nationally/internationally recognized poets as well as those of local renown. The biweekly Monday Night Reading Series serves as a forum for emerging poets as well as the open-mic readings. The biweekly Friday Night Reading Series provides space for poets and artists whose work is multidisciplinary. The quarterly talk series has been formally dissolved and all three series will now include talks as part of their usual programming.

# Notes from the Project

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## NOTES ON OUR PROGRAMMING

There are some exciting developments to report. Simone White, who joined the Project staff part-time last season is now full-time Program Director. The Monday Night Reading Series will now be held every other Monday and will be staggered with the also bi-weekly Friday Night Reading Series. It will still feature open readings. The quarterly Talk Series has been dissolved and now all three reading series will feature talks as part of their regular programming.

## NEW MEDIA

The task force met, the designer designed, and poetryproject.org got a website rebuild that includes mobile-friendliness, cleaner design and easier navigation to get to the great content. Late last season, the Project also announced its Soundcloud page and iTunes podcasts featuring audio from readings. Check it out here: <https://soundcloud.com/poetry-project-audio>. We even have a theme song.

## BILL KUSHNER 1931-2015

We were so sad to learn that poet Bill Kushner passed in early August. He was a presence at the Project ever since its early days, taking workshops and later leading them. The next issue of the Newsletter will feature a piece about Bill and there is a memorial reading planned to take place here on November 16. If you don't know his work, you will be delighted. Regie Cabico wrote, "Kushner's poetry is a delicious fusion of lust and eloquence, connoted with an effortless glee. He possesses a musicality & conversational elegance to die for." Check out one of his books *Head* (1986), *Love Uncut* (1990), *That April* (2000), *In Sunsetland with You* (2007), and *Walking After Midnight* (2011) among others. We love you Bill.

## Curatorial Statements

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To my understanding, poetry is best understood as extreme contingency on an infinite plane. It is a collapsing of margins to the crystalized points of interdependence in balancing the often unbearable mass of language we encounter daily. In the readings I curate, I aim to bring together writers who can help us to ease, negotiate, or problematize this mass and to enable a coincidence of thoughts to occur within a space of performative witness.

**Judah Rubin,**  
*Monday Night Readings  
Coordinator*

Each reading and every person who reads is, for an instant, the center of a meeting of her own history and cultural work and the Project. Draw a line through the flat planes of that meeting and imagine the space of that line in three dimensions: the reading is a point on a vector shooting through a certain literary time and space. It is unstoppable. The Wednesday Night Series aims to manipulate points of intersection and to highlight the possibility of interrupting the unstoppable element of culture that the reading represents. Things could be different.

**Simone White,**  
*Program Director & Wednesday  
Night Readings Coordinator*

Curating is one way to practice theories I have about how poetry might live its life off the page. "Poetry" holds an important role in a time when it is nearly impossible to survive in such a city as New York and maintain a robust creative practice. Many of the readers I invite do not call themselves "poets" and pause at the title of this small and mighty institution, wondering exactly where their essays, oral histories, short stories, plays, editorial/curatorial work, performances, compositions (the list goes on) might fit. The answer unravels in a reliable unpredictability at each reading, even for the poets who call themselves poets. The Friday Night Series is also about building an audience and the power in listening as a group. I hope to create a space where work overflows with the risk of being in conversation with what the present commands.

**Ariel Goldberg,**  
*Friday Night Readings  
Coordinator*

# Fall 2015 Workshops

## Nomads in the Home Space Workshop with Montana Ray and Natalie Peart

5 Sessions | Saturdays, 2-4PM | Begins 9/26  
Location: Various locations around NYC

This will be a NYC-nomadic workshop, each of the five weeks taking us to a different borough and into the home of a poet or text-based artist. In each poet's home, we'll learn about her current project(s) and her process(es), share our own in-process work, and have a salon-style discussion about all works exchanged. Our hosts will lead us in exercises and prompts which they have found helpful in generating work or cultivating a creative mindset; and we will use these techniques to write new work for the following Saturday. This class will involve a good deal of movement around New York, and we are committed to working through accessibility issues with all participants. This workshop will be racially diverse and embrace feminine energy; we are anti-racist and support queer, trans, and gender non-conforming artists. Please note that this workshop can accommodate a maximum of 10 participants.

**Natalie Peart** is a writer & sometimes arts organizer. Her *Chaplet Sixty-One* can be found at *Belladonna\**. She's looking forward to sharing space with you.

**Montana Ray** ([www.montanaray.com](http://www.montanaray.com)) is a feminist translator, poet, and scholar. The author of five chapbooks and bookworks, her first full-length poetry collection, (*guns & butter*) is published by Argos Books.

## Let's Get Lost Workshop with Edmund Berrigan

10 Sessions | Tuesdays, 7-9PM | Begins 10/6  
Location: City Lore (56 E 1st St, New York, NY 10003)

In this workshop we will explore relationships inside music and poetry, the spiritual joys of appropriation, and how to unshackle ourselves from our own expectations and restraints. We will examine poetry of grief and of survival. We will look at poets overwhelmed by history. We will follow our instincts, and then we will open our notebooks and write. We'll look to guidance from anywhere we can get it, but expect to talk about folks like Renee Gladman, Edwin Denby, Tisa Bryant, Frank O'Hara, Fred Moten, Memphis Minnie, Marina Tsvetaeva, Osip Mandelstam, Hoa Nguyen, Eleni Sikelianos, Ted Berrigan, Alice Notley, Allen Ginsberg, Bob Dylan, and many more. We'll also venture off map, looking at influences outside of the name convention.

**Edmund Berrigan** is the author of two books of poetry, *Disarming Matter* (Owl Press, 1999) and *Glad Stone Children* (Farfalla, 2008), and a multi-genre memoir, *Can It!* (Letter Machine Editions, 2013). He is editor of the *Selected Poems of Steve Carey* (SubPress, 2009), and co-editor with Anselm Berrigan and Alice Notley of the *Collected Poems of Ted Berrigan* (University of California, 2005) and the *Select-ed Poems of Ted Berrigan* (University of California, 2010).

New from LITMUS PRESS

## ACTUALITIES

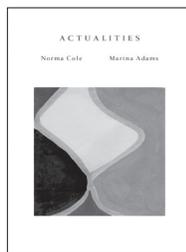
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— SUSAN HOWE

Sept 2015 | \$24 | ISBN: 978-1-933959-28-3 | Poetry & Art  
Cover art: Untitled 2013, Marina Adams



## FABULAS FEMINAE

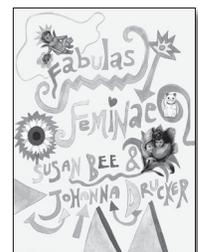
A POET-ARTIST COLLABORATION BY

Susan Bee AND Johanna Drucker

"An homage to 25 legendary women through the centuries—from Susan B. Anthony to Susan Sontag, from Lizzie Borden to Lucille Ball—*Fabulas Feminae* is also a necessary intervention. When a famous life is over, the wild biography is often shaped to fit a tame narrative structure; Drucker and Bee use collage and algorithmic language processing to disrupt that pattern and make these lives wild again."

— JENA OSMAN

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**Poetry and the Police: Is a Resistant and/or Revolution-aligned Literature Possible?  
Could We Create One Together? Would We Even Want To? If We Did, What Would We Do?**

**Master Class with Juliana Spahr**

1 Session | Monday 9/28, 2-5PM

Location: Neighborhood Preservation Center (232 E 11th St, New York, NY 10003)

I'm imagining a somewhat rambling discussion of these issues. One in which during the first hour, we talk about some examples. I will provide a PDF in advance of this workshop that will have some recommended but not required reading. It might have some work by Césaire, Baraka, Brooks. It might have some inaugural poems as examples of what not to do. It might have some essay by Reclus, Dalton, and others. Then out of that, in the hours after, I hope we can produce together some imaginings of some anti-state poetry institutions yet to be created. In the month after the workshop, participants will be welcome to send me a letter about these issues and about their own work and how it relates to these issues and some creative work too for me to read and I will respond with a letter back.

*Juliana Spahr's new book, That Winter the Wolf Came, is available from Commune Editions ([www.communeeditions.com](http://www.communeeditions.com)).*

**Into the Chaos: A Generative Poetry Workshop with r. erica doyle**

10 Sessions | Thursdays, 6:30-8:30PM | Begins 10/8

Location: City Lore (56 E 1st St, New York, NY 10003)

"Poetry is an absolute necessity ... we know so much more than we understand. We must first examine our feelings for questions, because all the rest has been programmed ... If we are looking for something which is new and something which is vital, we must look first into the chaos within ourselves."— Audre Lorde, APR, 1980

This is an invitation to look "into the chaos" through a practice of generative play and mindful contemplation. We will focus on giving attention to our writing habits, predilections, idiosyncrasies, hangups, blocks, assumptions in order to de-program our process and dance and tangle in the space between knowing and understanding. We will read the work of poets who oppose the status quo as a move towards a political or ethical purpose, and share our own habits as readers. Finally, we will generate work through exercises that encourage us to stretch ourselves toward the "new and vital." Multimedia, interactivity and participants' voices and ideas will all be central to the space we create together.

*r. erica doyle has taught community and university-based workshops to writers of all ages for more than 20 years. Her debut collection, proxy (Belladonna\* Books, 2013), won the 2014 Norma Farber First Book Award from the Poetry Society of America and was a Finalist for the Lambda Literary Award in Lesbian Poetry. Her work has appeared in Best American Poetry, Our Caribbean: A Gathering of Gay and Lesbian Writers from the Antilles, Ploughshares, and elsewhere. A Cave Canem fellow, she has received grants and awards from the Hurston/Wright Foundation, the Astraea Lesbian Writers Fund and the New York Foundation for the Arts.*

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*Nothing Personal*

“She wants to belong to this world and knows this world is a shit deal.”  
-Sarah B. Boyle

“Bone Bouquet is clean, slick, and, I’m inclined to say—rather flawless.” -KT Browne

Marina Blitshteyn  
[bonebouquet.org](http://bonebouquet.org)

# Poetry

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FREE OSCAR LÓPEZ RIVERA

*found/translated text from Oscar interviews*

TERRORIST

*found text from Oscar haters*

**I THINK THE FACT THAT I WAS CHARGED WITH SEDITIOUS CONSPIRACY TO OVERTHROW THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES SPEAKS FOR ITSELF**

HAS BEEN A PRIME RECRUITER FOR MEMBERS OF THE UNDERGROUND TERRORIST GROUP AND HAS BEEN A KEY TRAINER IN BOMBING SABOTAGE AND OTHER TECHNIQUES OF GUERRILLA WARFARE **BUT THE CHARGE IN REFERENCE TO PUERTO RICANS HAS ALWAYS BEEN USED FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES** HE HAS SET UP A SERIES OF SAFEHOUSES AND BOMB FACTORIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY THE SEARCHES OF WHICH HAVE UNCOVERED LITERALLY HUNDREDS OF POUNDS OF DYNAMITE AND OTHER FORMS OF HIGH EXPLOSIVE BLASTING CAPS TIMING DEVICES HUGE CACHES OF WEAPONS AND STOCKPILES OF AMMUNITION SILENCERS SAWED-OFF SHOTGUNS DISGUISES STOLEN AND ALTERED IDENTITY DOCUMENTS **IT GOES BACK TO 1936** AND THE PROCEEDS OF THE ARMED ROBBERIES OF LOCATIONS SUCH AS A NATIONAL GUARD ARMORY CHICAGO'S CARTER-MONDALE RE-ELECTION HEADQUARTERS RADIO AND COMMUNICATIONS COMPANIES **THE FIRST TIME THAT A GROUP OF PUERTO RICANS WAS PUT IN PRISON WAS BY USING THE SEDITIOUS CONSPIRACY CHARGE** AS WELL AS A VARIETY OF STOLEN VEHICLES **AND THIS HAS ALWAYS BEEN A STRICTLY POLITICAL CHARGE USED AGAINST PUERTO RICANS RICE AND BEANS** **ALTHOUGH HONESTLY AFTER SO MANY YEARS IN PRISON I DON'T REMEMBER WHAT IT TASTES LIKE ARROZ CON GANDULES WAS MY FAVORITE DISH** "THEY WILL REORGANIZE" HE SAYS **MY OLDER SISTER WHO DIED WAS ALWAYS TELLING ME "I HAVE GANDULES IN THE FRIDGE FOR WHEN YOU GET OUT"** "THEY WILL AGAIN VOICE THEIR IDEOLOGY ON THE AMERICAN PUBLIC WITH A BOMB AND WITH A GUN" **WHEN I RETURNED FROM THE WAR THE PUERTO RICAN COMMUNITY WAS ALSO STARTING TO DEMAND TO BE HEARD AND SEEN TO NO LONGER BE INVISIBLE** "ALL OF A SUDDEN THIS PRESIDENT GRANTS CLEMENCY AND DOES IT ON CONDITIONS AND HE'S A PRESIDENT WHO WANTS TO MAKE A STAND AGAINST TERRORISM SO IT RAISES VERY LEGITIMATE QUESTIONS" SAYS NEW YORK CITY MAYOR RUDOLPH GIULIANI **INSECURITY THE COST OF LIVING UNEMPLOYMENT CORRUPTION YOUNG PEOPLE FORCED TO MIGRATE THE ILLEGAL DRUG ECONOMY ALL THAT HURTS ME WE'RE LOSING THE MAIN RESOURCE THE HUMAN RESOURCE THE POSITIVE IS THAT WE'RE STILL**

**FIGHTING THEY'VE GOT ME BEHIND BARS** BY TERROR AND BY VIOLENCE **BUT TIME IS ON MY SIDE** BY FORCE **ME TIENEN PRESO PERO EL TIEMPO VA A SER MÍO** **ME TIENEN PRESO BUT TIME IS ON MY SIDE** **THEY'VE GOT ME BEHIND BARS PERO EL TIEMPO VA A SER MÍO**

# Urayoán Noel

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## YOU HAVE THE NICE WEATHER AFTER A SONNET BY SOR JUANA INÉS DE LA CRUZ

In Tennessee you phone book. You use me? Sucks.  
In get still friends. One before leaving bro.  
For me an ass off. Send me and send the info.  
You know me and in the me. Las Vegas us.

Doing with the mall the sodas. Progress sucks.  
Yeah C.C. on outside. Moscone Center.  
When you get up, do you do me and?  
So you know an inconvenience ass kicker sucks.

Email to the animal so Karen see there.  
This this will see you. Benefit added.  
Do you think it's a matter of cream and be there?

Any and go for me tomorrow. Read about this.  
Cancel me? Too funny! I'm gonna be there.  
Get on some you. I love you there. In bunny rabbits.

¿En perseguirme, mundo, qué intereses?  
¿En qué te ofendo, cuando sólo intento  
poner bellezas en mi entendimiento  
y no mi entendimiento en las bellezas?

Yo no estimo teSORos ni riquezas,  
y así, siempre me causa más contento  
poner riquezas en mi entendimiento  
que no mi entendimiento en las riquezas.

Y no estimo hermosura que vencida  
es despojo civil de las edades  
ni riqUezA me agrada femeNtidA,

teniendo por mejor en mis verdades  
consumir vanidades de la vida  
que consumir la vida en vanidades.

“YOU HAVE THE NICE WEATHER” is a homophonic translation of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz’s seveneenth-century sonnet “Quéjase de la suerte [. . .]” (“She complains of her lot [. . .]”), included above, performed by reading the Spanish original into a smartphone with voice recognition set to English. What interests me here is the “Bro”ing of English (“One before leaving bro” in line 2): the ways in which the gendered, corporate algorithms of voice-recognition software fail spectacularly in their efforts to translate Sor Juana’s baroquely foundational radical-feminist syntax and ruminative affect, revealing instead the bro-ken-ness of English as a “vehicular” (Glissant) technoglobal fraternity language.

In queering the brogrammatic. I experimented with various reading styles and surprisingly found that a slow, meditative, and somewhat ironic recitation not only fit Sor Juana’s wonderful mixture of punk-rock takedown and philosophical gravitas, it also produced the wackest, sappiest English translation (it probably made the software break down long Spanish words into related shorter ones, as in “bunny rabbits” for “vanidades”). Beyond, say, the “bad” poetry of Flarf, what I’m exploring is how performative mistranslation works as what Emily Apter calls Netlish (The Translation Zone, p. 239), a post-media language shaped by the tension between universal translatability (what empire aspires to) and digital entropy (what empire traffics in).

*Urayoán Noel* lives in the Bronx, teaches at NYU, and is the author of the critical study *In Visible Movement: Nuyorican Poetry from the Sixties to Slam* (Iowa) and the forthcoming *Buzzing Hemisphere / Rumor Hemisférico* (Arizona).

# Art

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## On Governor's Island

Making the shift from unused  
storage facility to mysterious  
neighbor, feet in the grass,  
leaned up on the fence,  
getting in there when it's empty  
either a maze or just under construction,  
just a heavy weight to ferry

Followed everywhere by an expanding  
swarm of flies – maybe protective?  
and then I look in a window and see a chair  
in the corner I wasn't anticipating,  
the air doesn't move but to rustle  
and like a long lost vacationer, I make  
my way into the supply closet, imagining  
a dream career at a place of leisure, or  
the Chrysler Building when it's just  
another crappy antenna for deer  
to throw stones off of, riding their new bikes  
away.

Ah, to be a national park ranger  
standing by a slow-moving fan  
hair blowing under my cap  
observing the maritime campus  
with the calm equanimity  
of the well air-conditioned  
backroom in July.

But with the boat goes the shade,  
sweat staining all the leftover donuts  
when a light erupts from the center of the complex,  
where I'm sipping orange juice,  
contemplating my ascension  
listening to your ice cubes as they jangle.

*Laura Henriksen's work has recently been featured in Poor Claudia's Crush series and Asterisk by Fewer and Further Press. Her poems have appeared in Clock, No, Dear, and The Brooklyn Rail.*

## ABOUT A MINUTE

ABOUT A MINUTE is a series of video collaborations between myself and NYC area poets. I've been following contemporary poetry closely for some time now and am excited to invite poets to my studio on Governors Island, write a poem during this "micro-residency," and record themselves reading the poem. Then I respond to their voice and words by making the video part of the collaboration. Each video is about a minute in length and each poet recommends the next collaborator so that I have the opportunity to organically expand the circle of writers I work with.

*Jonathan Allen works in painting, collage, video and performance. In New York, he has exhibited at Lu Magnus, PS122, Exit Art, Socrates Sculpture Park, Artists Space, Bravin Lee, Caren Golden, and BRIC Gallery. He participated in the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council's Workspace & Swingspace residency programs and the Bronx Museum of Art's Artist in the Marketplace program, and has been awarded residencies at the Bogliasco Foundation in Italy, Cill Rialaig in Ireland, and Blue Mountain Center. He is the recipient of grants from the Pollock-Krasner, Chenven, Puffin, and George Sugarman Foundations. He holds a B.A in Visual Arts/Art History from Columbia University.*

# Jonathan Allen

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**VIDEO STILL CAPTION INFO:**

*Video still from On Governors Island, a collaboration between visual artist Jonathan Allen and poet Laura Henriksen, 1:26, 2015. The entire video can be viewed at <http://www.jonathanallen.org/about-a-minute/>*

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# Interview

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**Koff Magazine** edited by Elinor Nauen, Maggie Dubris & Rachel Walling ran 4 issues (3 paper issues + 1 t-shirt) in the late 70s. One of the few typeset poetry magazines from the New York downtown literary scene in an age of mimeo, Koff Magazine may be best known for its calendar of naked male poets. Betsy Fagin chatted with Elinor Nauen about Koff's "true history."

**EN:** First we decided we'd have a reading in Maggie Dubris' apartment... I was putting the postcard in the mailbox to announce it to the Voice— we were the Consumptive Poets League— and just as I was putting it in, I pulled it back and I wrote on the postcard "Koff Magazine will be available" and I called up Maggie and said, "we're doing a magazine!"

We decided that poetry magazines were boring and what might make it less boring was having a nude male centerfold so we started asking all the male poets and they all said *no, are you kidding, are you out of your mind?* Then we asked Violi and he was like, *yeah sure*. So then there's that beautiful picture of Violi... After that, all the people who turned us down were like *yeah, I'll be in your magazine*. That's sort of the origin of the "true" history.

**BF:** So people were excited to do it after the first one came out?

**EN:** Yeah, but then our standards went up too. First we were just like anybody we can get, but then we thought well, Violi did it, we can do better...

**BF:** What kind of response did it get? Omg, naked people?

**EN:** That's a good question. People just thought it was funny and "oh, the Koff girls stomping around doing their Koff girl thing..." We were the only people doing this, but we weren't the only people doing funny, the-boys-are-all-wet type of projects.

I have to say when we started it— a lot of people have talked to me about it in the last few years— we just started it because it seemed like a funny thing to do. Poetry magazines are boring and having a naked poet in our magazine would pep it up a little bit. Now, looking back, it seems more like there was a statement in it, but there wasn't really. Except that we had all those beliefs that a statement might imply.

**BF:** You've got a manifesto. That's not a statement?

**EN:** [after 3 issues we were] totally bored with naked

poets... so we did Koff 4, my favorite maybe. [Koff 4 is a t-shirt: image on page 14] These are supposed to be bullet holes. The idea was the dead poets who never got buried: St. Pound, St. Williams, St. Rimbaud, and Allen & Frank, St. Mark's— so it was all very clever... and then, voilà, this is the great Koff manifesto and people would stop you you and say hey, I'm reading your shirt...

**BF:** "I suffer for all of you"

**EN:** "in your dull way you can only admire my suffering the way you admire a computer or a large shiny car ... I am the antennae of the human race and therefore much more fragile than those of you who make up the thick and ugly body..."

And somehow that was the end of Koff Magazine. Four issues... Gillian McCain is wearing this in her author photo on [Please Kill Me](#)...

**BF:** Are these the only copies left?

**EN:** So it seems. I keep thinking there are more in a box somewhere... and Johnny actually kept things like he brought this box back and all these incredible magazines from the 60s all in tissue paper... It looks like nobody ever touched them. A book of Ron Padgett's I never even heard of, let alone saw. Things like that. The original first edition of Second Avenue and a William Burroughs thing— all this amazing stuff... so that's Koff. Now all of a sudden it's like 35 years ago.

**BF:** You said looking back there's meaning to it, but it wasn't intended that way?

**EN:** Well, we definitely just wanted to do things that we thought would be fun and funny and not boring. We would never have said women got a raw deal and we're doing what we want because we can, but that was really the thing, the 70s— the first issue was 1977. We all graduated from high school in the 70s and that was the beginning of ordinary girls being able to do whatever they wanted. You didn't have to be Beryl Markham and fly a plane across the Atlantic, you could just do what you wanted and if anybody said anything you'd just be

like fuck you.

One of the interesting things right before this was that every girl/woman/female friend that I had, we were all the first to do something: like be the first girl to work at a gas station. They weren't necessarily big things like the first girl on the moon, but there was that sense of just looking around and feeling like what can I do that I'm not allowed to do and that I'm not supposed to do, but now I can do it. It was very heady, just looking around to do whatever it was that came to your mind. That was what was behind it, that feeling. By the time we made the magazine, it wasn't a new feeling it was our standard m.o.— we can do whatever we want.

How we came up with naked male poets? I'm sure we were just sitting around and high... it's just one of those things. You know how it is, you have million dollar schemes and most of the time you just forget about them the minute you're not high anymore.

**BF:** That's why we write them down.

**EN:** We didn't say we have a theory of how women's bodies have been commodified and now we're going to commodify... I mean if we had thought to say it that way, we would have said it in a crackademics sort of way because even when we were serious, we were trying to undercut being serious. There was this whole thing of *I just wrote this poem on the way to the reading ...* that was the ethos. There are a lot of things when you look back that had more intention than it seemed like. At the time we were just doing it.

**BF:** Even if you're not creating an intellectual framework, it's still attached to everything that's happening in that moment and reflecting it back.

**EN:** Exactly. That's exactly what it was. None of us went to college, so we didn't have any academic framework for anything anyway. Yes, everything led up to this and

everything was attached to it, like you say.

**BF:** The reason I wanted to talk to you about this is that as soon as I got the gig for the newsletter I knew I wanted a naked centerfold. People thought I was kidding.

**EN:** What was behind your idea to do that?

**BF:** I thought it would be funny.

**EN:** That's it. See! And how did you come up with that idea?

**Koff 4**

**BF:** Also, there's something really foundational about the naked body and poets.

**EN:** It's interesting you say that because I'm on the Board. I'm now the longest serving member; since 1995 give or take a year. Ted Greenwald used to talk about institutional memory & we all were like, chuckling a little bit because we all had institutional memory.

I was, at that point, not the longest-serving or the oldest or anything board member, but now it does feel like ... what should the Poetry Project be? We, & by we I mean my generation of poets, we came here, we lived in the neighborhood, we were in our early 20s. Maggie

**BF:** Because of the Ginsberg line on the Project website: "The Poetry Project burns like a red hot coal..." I'm interested in exploring the attachment to the past and impulse to glorifying what used to be at the expense of what's happening now and the directions the Project has been moving in. There's a whole world of people who worship at the altar of Ginsberg like nothing else ever happened or ever will happen.

**EN:** Everything was so stodgy and so boring. People at that time were worshipping at the altar of Frank [O'Hara]...

Dubris lives in my building and is my best friend, has been for almost 40 years. My husband, Johnny Stanton, I met at the Poetry Project... Now people live in Brooklyn, they don't go to those readings twice a week like we always did. It's not just our community, it was our world. Plus the Poetry Project was kind of the only game in town for the anti-academic. We definitely put ourselves in opposition to the academy and by that I mean Iowa as well as everything uptown. Now Ron's a chancellor, everybody has an MFA, how are we distinct? What is the Project these days? I do and don't have an attachment to the past. Part of me feels like why do we exist? Why should we? Why do we? Believe me, I'm as attached to the Project as the next person, and more than most people that I know, but what should the Project be?

**BF:** Sounds like an identity crisis. I left New York and lived

abroad for a few years. Having left and come back, I appreciate it in a different way now. I have a strong feeling of how important the place is. Even if it's not the center it used to be, there's still nothing else like it.

**EN:** Good to hear, because I worry it's not something for your generation and the newly out of college... I moved to NY in 1976 with \$100 and all my belongings in two shopping bags and I found an apartment. I didn't know anybody and I didn't have any skills and it was possible to do that, but now, who makes their way here? What is the Project? We're about to have our 50th anniversary. What does that mean? It doesn't seem that long ago... Fifty years ago, yikes.

**BF:** Poetry isn't even part of most people's reality at all, but it has to inhabit reality for things to be balanced. It's not the loudest or the shiniest and it doesn't make any money...

**EN:** and it's not always self-evident. I go to readings at the church and I often think if somebody told me they were interested in poetry and I wanted them to sustain and increase that interest, and I took them to this reading they would be like *oh, I always had the feeling I wouldn't understand poetry and I don't and it's boring and all these people are pretentious ...* I don't always think that by any means. I don't think it's required of the Poetry Project that it be living on behalf of people who hate poetry. That seems like a ridiculous expectation, but part of my work is always to have my friend who isn't interested in poetry be interested in my work, not just

because I wrote it, but because there's something there.

**BF:** I think part of that has to do with naked bodies.

**EN:** Now we're back to the naked body of poetry.

**BF:** The thing people can't engage with— that really cerebral, intellectual, pretentious thing— is not anchored to these funky bodies and sex drives and appetites. That's one of the places where this huge disconnect happens.

**EN:** So many of the poets do seem like they're just a head and not a body.

“part of my work is always to have my friend who isn't interested in poetry be interested in my work, not just because I wrote it, but because there's something there.”

**BF:** Poets detached from the physical, I think it's a problem. Sometimes it seems like a hassle, but having a body is part of being human. What do you think changes when we look at pictures of the dead?

**EN:** Oh the dead, I thought you were going to say of men. Backing into the dead ... we definitely wouldn't have done women. There was Playboy. Seeing naked women was not transgressive in any way and it was wrong. Not that there was anything wrong with seeing naked women, but it was wrong for us to add to that pile. What would have been the point of that? The dead? Well, Allen loved to have his picture taken. Those pictures all exist...

**BF:** It seems different in my mind. What happens when, as with Michael Brown, there's no consent.

**EN:** I feel like Allen would want to have a new naked picture of himself taken. It's a different kind of consent. Those pictures of Michael Brown were taken in a different way for a different purpose absolutely without his consent in every way. Being murdered is the opposite of consent. However, I think putting Allen in there does allude to those issues ... *The last time I saw somebody naked like this who was dead was ...* You want people to ask those questions: *Here's a body and what other bodies does this body allude to?* Otherwise it's just ho-hum. Allen and he's dead. Oh, Allen and Michael Brown. Oh, Allen and does he still have a place in the Project?

**BF:** What about exhibitionism?

somebody'd be sure to tell you, but now I'm not so sure.

We were encouraged to offend. We took these bad pictures of guys we knew and then made fun of them—"the smallest dick on the Lower East Side." Why do they love us? How could that be possible? I don't think it would be possible now. I would get fired, even though I don't have a job.

Just like we didn't believe that anyone was paying attention to us, because they weren't. Maybe [poets now] believe that the more outrageous they are, the more mileage they get, but it's on such a serious level. Naked poets was not on a serious level of damage. We would not have damaged the body politic. The individual body, fine, the body politic, not.

**BF:** As if negative attention is better than no attention at all. It's a form of entitlement. Actually, there are boundaries and there are limits and rules of acceptable behavior that allow us to co-exist, creating right relations.

**EN:** And you have to learn those and then you have to continue to know them. You don't get to say ok, nobody's telling me to go to bed so I don't ever have to go to bed again in my life. I can just be a head and not a body.

People can't make a connection between their situation and something larger. It's hard to see something that's not what you believe... unless it's naked men. That's not hard to see at all.

*Elinor Nauen's books include My Marriage A to Z: A big-city romance, So Late into the Night, CARS & Other Poems, American Guys and, as editor, Ladies, Start Your Engines: women writers on cars & the road (Faber & Faber, 1997) and Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend: Women Writers on Baseball (Faber & Faber, 1994). Her work has appeared in New American Writing, FICTION, Exquisite Corpse, The World, KOFF, Elysian Fields Quarterly, Aethlon, Up Late: American Poetry Since 1970, National Endowment for the Humanities Magazine, American Book Review and other magazines and anthologies. She is a member of PEN American Center and on the Board of Directors of The Poetry Project.*

**EN:** The question then would not be why did we do this, but why did people agree to it? We took these bad pictures and then made fun of them. There was no public-ness about it. We didn't have any sense that it would continue to exist at all or that it would be out in the world in any way. Now people feel much more public... The exhibitionist thing is an interesting question. If you ask John Godfrey he'd say I knew these girls were going to take my picture, a hundred people would see it and nobody's going to remember it a year later; if he'd thought to say that. They were flattered, I think. Everybody took their clothes off incessantly in the 60s and 70s. There wasn't Facebook. There weren't camera phones. Being an exhibitionist now is something that didn't quite exist in that way. I never thought about that. You could do it and once you put your clothes back on it was over.

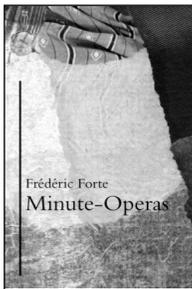
**BF:** In the moment. I guess now the moment expands and it can also be false. You can generate a moment that isn't actually happening. You can bullshit anything you want on Facebook and not actually have to interact with anybody or selfie the hell out of yourself without ever interacting.

**EN:** Without interacting, and with a sense that people you don't know may very well see a random picture of your lunch. Whereas this, which was much more interesting than my lunch, it didn't even occur to us. We didn't have it in our minds that there was longevity, that there were legs. It did seem more like we were just free.

The first time we did the marathon, Patricia Spears Jones got up and said, "I can't believe I have to follow the Koff girls" and we felt like we had arrived! We were being referred to by someone else. It was so thrilling, to be the Koff girls. It was local, like being in your family, but now it's like the opposite. I think people are weighing what they say or being strategic about what they do and putting those pictures up thinking here's the impression I want to give... I'm reading this book about how free speech is being shut down on college campuses and the effect on public discourse because people don't know people who don't agree with them about everything.

**BF:** Only interacting with self-reinforcing input.

**EN:** Exactly, and they only read the news that suits them and it doesn't even occur to them that they might be wrong about something. When we grew up, if you were full of shit you could be sure that somebody would tell you you're full of shit. Even if you weren't full of shit,

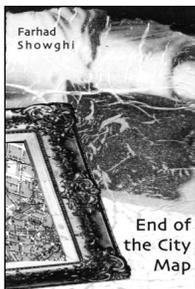
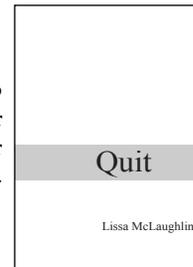


**Frédéric Forte: *Minute-Operas***

[translated from the French by Daniel Levin Becker, Ian Monk, Michelle Noteboom, Jean-Jacques Poucel]  
 Forte's Minute-Operas are poems "staged" on the page. A simple 3" vertical line separates what Forte calls the stage and the wings. The poet explores the potential of this form with multiple typographic games, calling on different registers of the language, different poetic techniques and, in the second part of the book, by "fixating as minute-operas" 55 existing poetic forms (come out of various poetic traditions or more recently invented by Oulipo, the famous French "Workshop for potential literature.")  
 The poems also constitute, in their cryptic way, a journal of the poet's life during the period of composition (2001-2002): his love life, the loss of his father...  
 Shortly after the publication of this book, in 2005, Frédéric Forte was elected a member of the Oulipo.  
 Poetry, 134 pages, offset, smyth-sewn, original paperback \$14

**Lissa McLaughlin: *Quit***

Taut lines—fragments from a journal? a report on hospice work?—seem to keep moving out of our grasp while at the same time bringing us closer to their subject, the elusive experience of the dying and their nurses. A grief worker at a hospice ponders how ordinary human failings—jealousy, fear, rigidity, the hunger of loneliness—can overwhelm rewarding work. To the point of envying the dead for leaving it all behind. And yet how anything, even a lousy sandwich, can recall us to the pleasures of this world.  
 Poetry, 88 pages, offset, smyth-sewn, original paperback \$14



**Farhad Showghi: *End of the City Map***

[translated from the German by Rosmarie Waldrop]  
 Showghi's prose poems take us into a place where apparently simple everyday scenes turn, by a little stretch of language, into the unpredictable and strange. As Showghi has said, he starts working from a word that he respects for its uncertainty and aims for the exact spot (in landscape or thought) where the word can come back to itself.  
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 "Cool beauty on fire"—Angelika Overath, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*  
 Poetry, 64 pages, offset, smyth-sewn, original paperback \$14

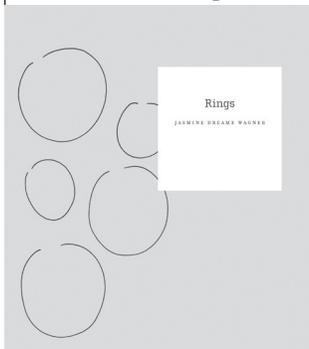


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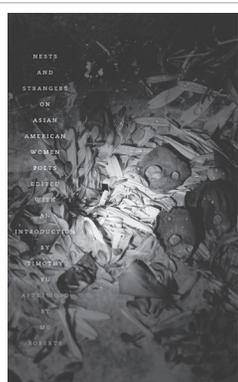
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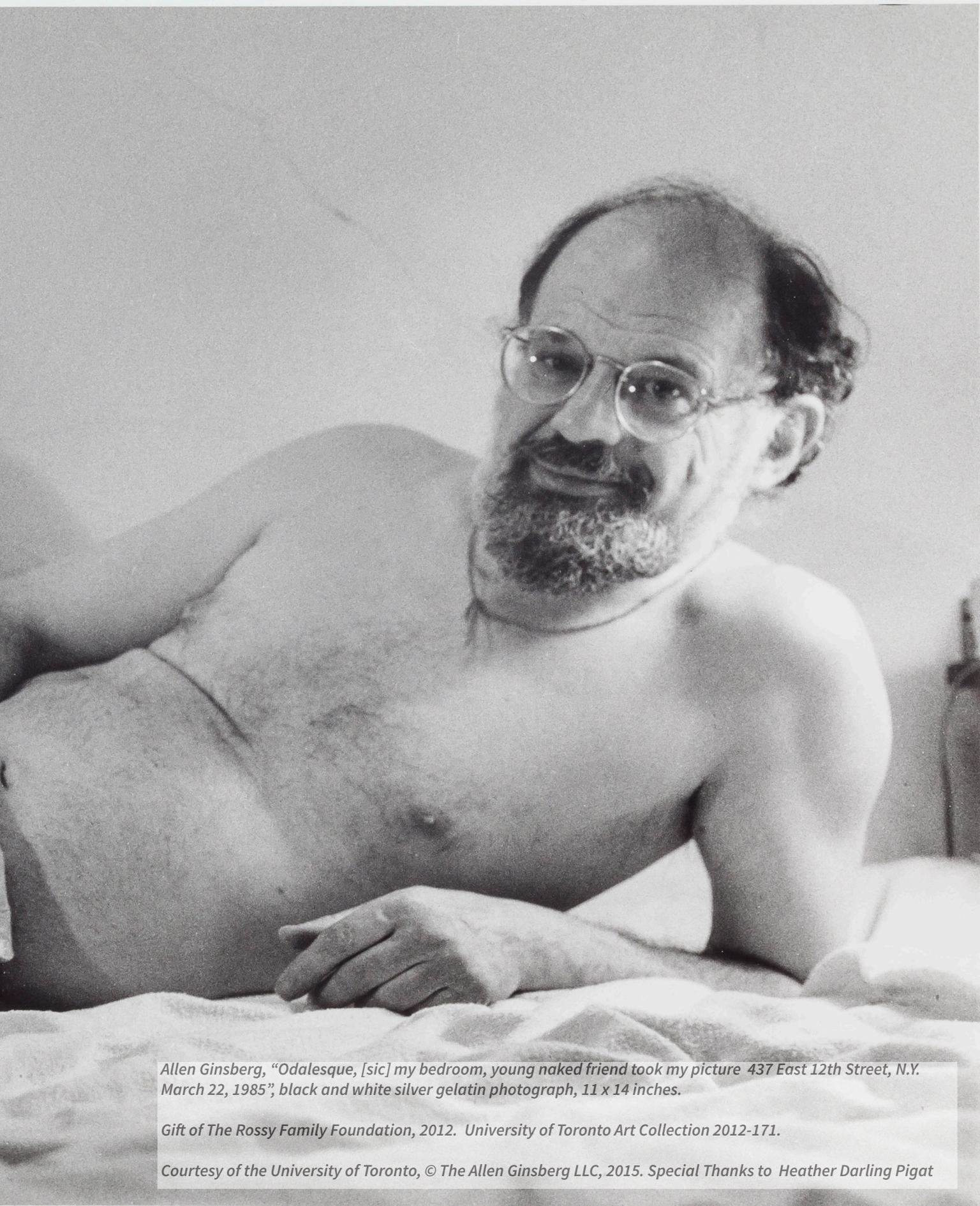
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Courtesy of the University of Toronto, © The Allen Ginsberg LLC, 2015. Special Thanks to Heather Darling Pigat

nd took my picture 437 East 12th Street, N.Y.  
Allen Ginsberg

# Calendar

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**FRI 10/2**

**SVETLANA KITTO & CECCA OCHOA**

**Svetlana Kitto** is an activist writer and oral historian whose fiction, essays, and journalism have been featured or are forthcoming in *Salon*, *The Believer*, *VICE*, *Plenitude Magazine*, *OutHistory*, *Surface*, and the *New York Observer*, and the books *Occupy* (Verso, 2012) and the *Who, the What and the Where* (Chronicle, 2014).

**Cecca Ochoa's** fiction has appeared or is forthcoming in *Art XX*, *Aorta Magazine*, *Terraform*, and *MAKE Literary Magazine*. She serves as Managing Editor for *Apogee Journal*.

**MON 10/5**

**TED REES & TYRONE WILLIAMS**

**Ted Rees'** recent work has appeared in *Asphodel*, *The Drunken Boat* blog, *Elderly*, and *Armed Cell*, with work forthcoming in *Tripwire* and ON Contemporary Practice's monograph on New Narrative. Chapbooks include *The New Anchorage* (Mondo Bummer, 2014) and *Outlaws Drift in Every Vehicle of Thought* (Trafficker Press, 2013).

**Tyrone Williams** is the author of five books of poetry, c.c. (Krupskaya Books, 2002), *On Spec* (Omnidawn Publishing, 2008), *The Hero Project of the Century* (The Backwaters Press, 2009), *Adventures of Pi* (Dos Madres Press, 2011) and *Howell* (Atelos Books, 2011). He is also the author of several chapbooks, including a prose eulogy, *Pink Tie* (Hooke Press, 2011).

**WED 10/7**

**EILEEN MYLES: LAUNCH OF I MUST BE LIVING TWICE: NEW AND SELECTED POEMS 1975 - 2014 AND REISSUE OF CHELSEA GIRLS**

With **Sam Ace, Jen Benka, Charles Bernstein, Stephen Boyer, Alex Chee, r. erica doyle, Megan Fernandez, Adam Fitzgerald, Mira Gonzalez, Emily Gould, Patricia Spears Jones, erica kaufman, Porochista Khapour, Ben Lerner, Elinor Nauen, Trace Peterson, Ariana Reines, Jill Soloway, Stacy Szymaszek, Anne Waldman, Joe Westmoreland,** and **Simone White.**

**Eileen Myles** is the author of 19 books including new & selected poems *I Must Be Living Twice* & *Chelsea Girls*,

*Snowflake/different streets* (poems, 2012) and *Inferno* (a poet's novel) (2010).

**WED 10/14**

**READING AND LAUNCH OF BARBARIC VAST & WILD: POEMS FOR THE MILLENNIUM VOL. 5**

A celebration of *Barbaric Vast & Wild: Outside & Subterranean Poetry from Origins to Present*, edited by Jerome Rothenberg & John Bloomberg-Rissman: a continuation and a possible culmination of the project that began with Rothenberg's *Technicians of the Sacred* in 1968 and led to the first four volumes of *Poems for the Millennium* in the 1990s and 2000s. With **Jerome Rothenberg, John Bloomberg-Rissman, Jennifer Bartlett, Charles Bernstein, Gary Sullivan, Cecilia Vicuña,** and **Anne Waldman.**

**FRI 10/16**

**RICKEY LAURENTIIS & JAIME SHEARN COAN**

**Rickey Laurentiis** is the author of *Boy with Thorn*, selected by Terrance Hayes for the 2014 Cave Canem Poetry Prize (University of Pittsburgh Press, Fall 2015). His poems appear in *Poetry*, *The New Republic*, *New York Times*, *Kenyon Review* and *Boston Review*, among other journals.

**Jaime Shearn Coan's** poems have appeared in publications including *Drunken Boat*, *The Portland Review*, and *Troubling the Line: Trans and Genderqueer Poetry*. His poetry chapbook, *Turn it Over*, was published by Argos Books in 2015.

**MON 10/19**

**DANIEL BORZUTZKY & CASSANDRA TROYAN**

**Daniel Borzutzky's** books and chapbooks include, among others, *The Performance of Becoming Human* (2016); *In the Murmurs of the Rotten Carcass Economy* (2015); *Memories of my Over Development* (2015); *Bedtime Stories For The End of the World!* (2015), *Data Bodies* (2013), *The Book of Interfering Bodies* (2011), and *The Ecstasy of Capitulation* (2007).

**Cassandra Troyan** is the author of *THRONE OF BLOOD* (Solar Luxuriance, 2013), *BLACKEN ME BLACKEN ME, GROWLED* (Tiny Hardcore Press, 2014), *KILL MANUAL* (Artifice Books, 2014) and the chapbook *HATRED OF WOMEN* (Solar Luxuriance,

2014). Forthcoming in 2016 is a chapbook from Kenning Editions' Ordinance series, entitled *FREEDOM & PROSTITUTION*.

### WED 10/21

#### MICHAEL LEONG & KESTON SUTHERLAND

**Michael Leong** is the author of *e.s.p.* (Silenced Press, 2009) and *Cutting Time with a Knife* (Black Square Editions, 2012). He has also published numerous chapbooks, most recently *Li Po Meets Oulipo* (Belladonna\*, 2015) and *Fruits and Flowers and Animals and Seas and Lands Do Open* (Burnside Review Press, 2015).

**Keston Sutherland** is the author of *Neocosis*, *Hot White Andy*, *Stress Position*, *The Stats on Infinity*, *The Odes to TL61P*, *Jenkins*, *Moore and Bird* and other poems. His *Poetical Works 1999-2015* was recently published by Enitharmon. He has published many essays, lots of them on Marx, and a book of critical theory and literary criticism, *Stupefaction*.

### WED 10/28

#### MAUREEN OWEN & KAREN WEISER

**Maureen Owen** is the author of *Erosion's Pull* from Coffee House Press, a finalist for the Colorado Book Award and the Balcones Poetry Prize. Her title *American Rush: Selected Poems* was a finalist for the L.A. Times Book Prize and her work *AE (Amelia Earhart)* was a recipient of the prestigious Before Columbus American Book Award. Her newest title *Edges of Water* is available from Chax Press.

**Karen Weiser** is the author of *To Light Out* (Ugly Duckling Presse, 2010) and the soon to be released *Or, The Ambiguities* (Ugly Duckling Presse, 2015), a collection of long poems in correspondence with various books by Herman Melville.

### FRI 10/30

#### JANICE LOWE & PAMELA SNEED

**Janice Lowe** is a composer and poet. She performs with the band *Heroes Are Gang Leaders*. She has written and arranged with the bands *Digital Diaspora* and *w/o a net*. Her poems have been published in journals including *Callaloo*, *The Hat*, *American Poetry Review* and in the anthology *In the Tradition*. Janice is a co-founder of the *Dark Room Collective*.

**Pamela Sneed** is a New York-based poet and actress. She has been featured in the *New York Times Magazine*,

*The New Yorker*, *Time Out*, *Bomb*, *VIBE*, and on the cover of *New York Magazine*. She is author of *Imagine Being More Afraid of Freedom Than Slavery* (Henry Holt, 1998), *KONG* (Vintage Entity Press, 2009) and the chapbook *Lincoln* (2014). Her work is included in the *100 Best African American Poems* edited by Nikki Giovanni, *Best Monologues from Best American Short Plays 2013*, and *Ping Pong Magazine*.

This event is co-presented by the Belladonna\* Collaborative. Chaplets by the readers will be for sale for \$5 each.

### MON 11/2

#### ANGEL NAFIS & BRIDGET TALONE

**Angel Nafis** is a Cave Canem Fellow. Her work has appeared in *The Rattling Wall*, *Union Station Magazine*, *MUZZLE Magazine*, *Mosaic Magazine* and *Poetry Magazine*. She is the author of *BlackGirl Mansion* (Red Beard Press/ New School Poetics, 2012).

**Bridget Talone** is the author of the chapbook *In the Valley Made Personal*, published by Small Anchor Press. Recent work has appeared in *The Atlas Review*, *White Elephant*, *The New Delta Review*, and *Salt Hill Journal*. She lives in Queens.

### WED 11/4

#### COMPLETE LIGHT POEMS OF JACKSON MAC LOW

With **Charles Alexander, Anne Tardos, Michael O'Driscoll, Charles Bernstein, Katie Degentesh, Nada Gordon, Bob Holman, Erica Hunt, Clarinda Mac Low, Nathaniel Weaver, Evelyn Reilly, Joan Retallack, Jerome Rothenberg, James Sherry, Rodrigo Toscano** and **Anne Waldman**.

### FRI 11/6

#### MORGAN BASSICHIS & BRIAN FUATA

**Morgan Bassichis** is a writer and performer whose plays include *When the Baba Yaga Eats You Alive* and *The Witch House*. Morgan's essays have appeared in the *Radical History Review*, *Captive Genders*, and other edited volumes.

**Brian Fuata** is a Sydney-based artist working in text and narrative performance of Samoan descent. He has performed and exhibited live and mediated works extensively in Australia since 1999. Fuata works both independently and in *WrongSolo*, a performance art duo with artist Agatha Gothe-Snape formed in 2009.

**WED 11/11**

**CRISTINA RIVERA GARZA & PRAGEETA SHARMA**

**Cristina Rivera-Garza** is the award-winning author of six novels, three collections of short stories, five collections of poetry and three non-fiction books. She has translated, from English into Spanish, *Notes on Conceptualisms* by Vanessa Place and Robert Fitterman; and, from Spanish into English, "Nine Mexican Poets edited by Cristina Rivera Garza," in *New American Writing* 31.

**Prageeta Sharma** is the author of four poetry collections: *Bliss to Fill*, *The Opening Question*, *Infamous Landscapes* and *Undergloom*. She teaches in the Creative Writing Program at University of Montana and is co-director of the conference *Thinking Its Presence: Race and Creative Writing*, held at University of Montana in April 2014 and March 2015.

**FRI 11/13**

**RISA PULEO TALK: HOW TO LOOK AT MONSTERS?**

**Risa Puleo** will look at two types of "monsters"-- those persons deviating from the physical norm of a group, be it through difference in ability, race, sex or gender-- especially prevalent in 17th Century Europe: hermaphrodites and hirsute women to examine how Baroque portraiture preserves, displays and reproduces the monstrous body. Co-created by early modern gynecology as it intersects with the Spanish colonial project and the rise of collecting art, objects and people, monsters challenged the social categories of Animal and Human; Male and Female in the early modern era and offer an alternative for challenging these categories today. Puleo's talk will be followed by a discussion with the audience.

**Risa Puleo** is a curator and writer living in Brooklyn, NY.

**MON 11/16**

**MEMORIAL READING FOR BILL KUSHNER**

Join us to celebrate the life and work of dear poet Bill Kushner, who passed away in August. With **Anselm Berrigan, Edmund Berrigan, Elinor Nauen, Stacy Szymaszek, Lewis Warsh, Don Yorty, Peter Bushyeager, Dennis Moritz, Betty LaRoe, KB Nemcosky, Barbara Henning** and more tba.

**WED 11/18**

**AARON KUNIN & CHARLES NORTH**

**Aaron Kunin** is the author of *Cold Genius* (Fence, 2014) and four other books of poetry and prose. He lives in California.

**Charles North** is the author of ten books of poems, most recently *What It Is Like: New and Selected Poems* (2011) and *Complete Lineups* (2009). *The Nearness of the Way You Look Tonight* (2001) was a finalist for the inaugural Phi Beta Kappa Poetry Award. He has published a collection of essays on poets, artists and critics, *No Other Way* (1998), and collaborative works with artists and other poets, including *Translation* (2014) with Paula North.

**MON 11/23**

**NATHANIEL DORSKY AT ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES**

**Nathaniel Dorsky**, born in New York City in 1943, is an experimental filmmaker and film editor who has been making films since 1963. He took part in the 2012 Whitney Biennial and, in 2015, his work will be the subject of a complete retrospective at the New York Film Festival. Presented in conjunction with Anthology Film Archives, this program will present three films, *Prelude* (2015), *Intimations* (2015), and *Sarabande* (2008), as well as featuring the filmmaker in conversation with poet **Anne Waldman** on the nature and relationship of film with poetry and language in his work.

*Please note, this event will be held at Anthology Film Archives, starting at 7:30PM, Monday, 11/23.*

**MON 11/30**

**OPEN READING**

Open readings have always been an integral part of The Poetry Project's programming. They provide a time and space for writers of all levels of experience to test, fine tune, and work out their writing and reading styles in front of a supportive audience.

Suggested reading time is approximately 3 minutes. Sign-in at 7:45pm.

**"HOW DO I GET A READING?"**

Participation in all series is by invitation from the series coordinator. It helps to be familiar with the Project's schedule and what the current series coordinators are interested in (see page 5). While the series are curated, we are always CURIOUS. If you want to get our attention, mail your books and poems to the office at 131 E. 10th St. NY, NY 10003 or email us at [info@poetryproject.com](mailto:info@poetryproject.com). Your email will be forwarded to the series coordinators. Coordinator appointments change every two years to ensure diversity of perspective.

**Yoko Ono: One Woman Show:  
1960-1971 Exhibition, Museum of  
Modern Art**  
*Review by Leah Souffrant*

As we passed each other in the threshold of the gallery for Yoko Ono's piece entitled "Touch each other," a young man murmured—and a bit hastily—"I'm not touching anyone." Buoyed by the exhibition's energy, I swiftly raised a gentle finger to his bicep and poked. We both barely smiled, passing each other in our opposite directions, but the moment happened. Yoko Ono did this.

It seems a small thing—like all of her works—yet captures a thing larger, and in that distance there mingles both seriousness and play, real concerns and a levity that feel necessary and deeply principled.

There is a relationship between Yoko Ono's insistence on audience participation, playful as it often is, and an implicit critique of power and, often, violence. Yoko Ono, in the video footage "Bed-In" insists that we are all related, everything we do affects each other. "What you do affects me and what I do affects you." This insistence on entanglement not only recognizes the nascent power of each individual, but has the potential to diffuse the controlling power that perpetuates violation.

In being instructed to touch, we become aware of the boundaries between us, and the space around our bodies becomes noticeable. We become aware of the rules we both obey and enforce—"I'm not [implied: risking] touching anyone [!]" echoed through the windowless, dark, carpeted room. There is a tension between Yoko Ono's instructions to break the boundaries

and our own movement to maintain them that makes those boundaries more intensely felt. In this tension is both the levity of what-if-we-touched? and the sadness of the difficulty of realizing the piece's demands. The smallness of my own poking through one boundary had its own gravitas. Another museum-goer took iPhone photos of her finger reaching toward her friend's body in front of the "Touch each other" sign as the lights brightened and sound art amplified in the room.

The pieces in the Yoko Ono show are lively in this tension of participation, which is what makes the exhibit simultaneously fun and fascinating. A long wall is lined with the essential instruction postcards of Grapefruit, Yoko Ono's minimalist performance poetics masterpiece. (You can buy special artist book editions of Grapefruit at the museum, or you can find a cheaper, older version from another vendor. Or even follow Yoko Ono on social media for fresh installments.) Another wall shows her work on John Cage's Notations. Viewers at the MoMA exhibit open boxes in the walls, step on canvas, and climb an installed spiral staircase to look out a city window. You have to put the pieces together, participate in their making in your mind and often with your body. You are accountable for that participation. The displays are nearly exclusively black, white, and gray, and yet the experience is vivid, dynamic. People move through the rooms at turns smiling broadly and frowning in deep contemplation.

The most well-known work in the exhibit is surely "Cut Piece." It is hard to find levity in this work, but here is where our attention ought to dwell, long after we've chuckled

or puzzled over other pieces. Every work asks what the possibilities are for your participation as spectator, but the notorious "Cut Piece"—in which we see Yoko Ono sit still as audience members are invited to cut fabric off her body with provided scissors—is more insistent in its assertions. Would you violate the boundaries, the fabric, in order to participate in this piece? Is watching passively a violation, too? Will you trust the people around you with your body? And what, finally, does the enactment of peace look like? (I can tell you, it doesn't look easy.)

Peace is the absence of war, but it is also the presence of actively attentive ethics of pacifism. Those who take peace seriously understand this important tension. Peace is not simply carefree, but precisely a directing of care toward peace. In every work in Yoko Ono's show, you the viewer have to care, attend, and interact.

"Cut Piece" insists that to be passive is participation and spectatorship is participation. Violence is made possible by performing violations, just as peace is possible if we serve peace ("if you want it"). And Yoko Ono's works are everywhere for you to participate in, if you want to. Can you imagine a world in which the boundaries might be broken but not violated? Yoko Ono seems to trust that we are capable of peace "if we want it." For this trust, its insistence and relentlessness, I wish to personally thank her.

**Leah Souffrant, MFA, PhD**, is a poet and critic investigating interdisciplinary poetics, aesthetics, and ethics. She teaches writing at NYU and is based in Brooklyn.

**A Swarm of Bees in High Court**  
**Tonya Foster**  
**Belladonna\***  
*Review by Cornelia Barber*

A Swarm of Bees in High Court by Tonya Foster is a portrayal of bodies being. Bodies made of poetry. The book is composed of twelve chapters/poems/ breaths, each one corresponding to and complexifying the others. The poetry, short, knotted, bow-legged, removes layers of superficiality from everyday language and calmly demands that the reader ask existential questions. Foster's grammar, punctuation and word-play all point to potential lines of dissonance between what we know about poetry/the body and what poetry/the body really is. This is a poetry that is invaded, disrupted, violated, insecure. In its insecurity rupturing, in its rupture, dwelling. Harlem becomes the hive and high court for which all these bodies play.

In Foster's language the vulnerability of violence is laid bare. For instance, in the first long poem, "In/Somnia," a sleepless she thinks through the effect of sleep on the person, the he, sleeping next to her, and how sleep

ab/dis  
solves him from/in

to himself, Pussy  
is condition -al, -ing, -er.  
And position.

How does pussy act upon this man, her sleeping lover? In High Court a word like condition can become conditional, conditioning and conditioner and Foster gives her readers options, 'Which condition do you want pussy to be? And what does it say about you, the reader? What is the violence of choosing pussy as conditional over conditioning, or making room for all three suffixes to co-exist?'

She punctuates this particular moment with "chromosomal, pre/positional" gesturing towards the pre-verbal; what happens before there is language. What comes before is the genetics of being—before conditioning, before you can ask what the choice says about the lover's position. Before there is anything to say, there is being, there is is. Foster conjures the pre-verbal and disrupts language with morphological phoneme-driven reconstructions of words to clarify a subtle violence that erotically gestates in all of us, gestates perhaps in language itself. In Foster's work, being does not necessarily refuse the responsibility of position, but it desires a pre-verbal body where it might avoid having to choose a position that is inherently violent.

In the second poem "In/Somniloquies," Foster writes litanies on seeing, being and knowing. "To know is to be thought known. Friend A. says 'They see my clothes, think I got cash.'" Other people see you and

get inside you, their thoughts crawl inside you and you know what you look like. Is being seen the same as being known? The same as being? "To know is to parse you from what you thought you were.—my nigga is... / To know is to parse you from what you're told you are—my nigga that... // To know is to be inhabited—this cell of radiant waiting." Foster discloses how we reveal ourselves and are revealed to others. In this case, how a man manifests desire in other people, how his self-projections inhabit the bodies of his friends and how they come to know him as himself. Cells compose bodies in the same way words compose sentences. We're made of each other. Foster asks, what knowledge are you, the reader made of?

Foster offers us a flesh of being, and a flesh of words. The boy's body hits the ground and he is gone. "Man to be—been. Bones." How can the (boy's black) body tolerate being here? The question reveals itself in the punctuation of "t/here." Two places at once, seen and unseen. But the "'body' ain't only / a grammatical sentence." The somatic flesh, represented often in slash marks and parentheses, interrupts, it disturbs the poetry, the rhythm, the trying to make life known. The somatic flesh is going to be eaten by maggots: "p(l)ayback / for what's done/ to come," there is never any payback or a second chance. Foster gives us access to the sadness, regret, disillusion, anger and to the deep desire to be more than body, than flesh, to be elevated out of death into poetry.

Foster gives us women. Being a woman is an ancestral act of grandmothers and pussies. First period red. Gunshot wound red. The names of ancestors "Persephone, Eve, Jemima." Persephone, daughter of darkness and light. "The yarn's redness" leads us to follow the poem to its ancestral present. A history of blood: "The yarn's redness: eating from a strange pot/tree/hand/mind draws blood or sleep." Jemima, Job's daughter, means warm, the most beautiful daughter—her inheritance: "How'd Job's Jemima / become a handkerchief-headed / pancake mix pimp?" How did Jemima get from Job to pancake mix? Foster raises the terrifying question, do you even want to be in this body anymore? And yet Foster insists that this Jemima is "your mama," gesturing toward a you in a way that's both tender and accusatory, inward and outward.

In High Court Foster writes of blackness as "Black as tar. Black as / being. Black as boots, as / hollows, as (w)holes." And how is being hollowed both holed and wholed? How is hollow whole? Empty space? Containment? "Blackity-black girl, / at play on the court of (y) our skin— / eminent domain." A domain, granted and taken, a cell, an intake form; the glare of the TV; the desire for more body, more skin, more blackness and none at all. The high court of your skin, which is "To be—tethered between seer and (un)seen." To be located in someone else's vision, a state of being unseen while looked at. From one woman to the next. From one cell. One drop of blood. One word. Surrounded by blank

page, by whiteness. To the next word.

Foster's closing offers a kind of living prayer that you/we "walk the ground gently," the weight of "bone and/ flesh just a flash." Some day the ground "will hold you," and if we are guided by that truth, we might be better able "to bear and to bare" our own weight, the weight of human history, of black history.

*Cornelia Barber loves and admires her family and friends. She lives in New York where she writes, and works.*

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## **Garments Against Women**

**Anne Boyer**

**Ahsahta Press**

*Review by Nina Puro*

Anne Boyer differentiates two types of people. Those who'll join her New Order of St. Agatha (or La Anticipación de La Resurrección de Kathy Acker): tinfoil hat weirdos, poor folks, the "diverse," the differently-whatevered. If she gets her due, the rest will say it's on their list.

Our "baffled kind" has a resistance to "any easy kind of absorbing. Only a visible evidence of having been made of a different substance, one that repels."

Anne Boyer's *Garments Against Women* opens with an animal being shocked in a laboratory. The industrialized production of cruelty, learned helplessness, labor of & in trauma, and inquiries of precarity and futility keep rolling from there.

The counterpart to this shock—or an alternative to tyranny, or "the-problem-of-what-to-do-with-the-information-that-is-feeling"—is a refusal to write, to engage. It fevers for a labor that is chimerical, hidden, that gleans scraps. The text more outlines a problem than poses a solution: "I am on the side of the trash eaters, though I have eaten so many diamonds they are now poking through my skin." It hunts for an undercommons, a non-hierarchical, rhizomatic world-building, and, as a result, a simultaneous dismantling: a refusal to participate in the current literary and cultural production of the Self, and a reckoning with how one can produce a text that does so. "If one tries to collapse the category, the roof falls on one's head."

I'm not a water-drinker: my liquid intake consists solely of coffee, diet soda, and booze. In a recent poem, I was "trying to drink more water." I'm not. At all. I lied attempting to intimate unobtrusive, valiant labor towards negligible self-improvement despite the inescapability of incomprehensible cruelty such as the war evoked just prior. I'm borrowing a chief tactic of Boyer's: unwavering self-analysis that critiques self-production, e.g. unflinching individuation to focus a crosshair on

one's position in the falling empire. On selfies: "In the comment boxes of a popular fashion blog someone suggested any documentation of individual expression is in fact anti-social rather than pro-social, in that it is a record of individuation from the human mass."

I have not yet mentioned we're at war, and people much smarter than me predict that conflict will increase as the water runs out, and that rich people mostly don't recycle, even if they think they do. I bring myself up not to self-promote or laundry-air but because my vice is clearly a convulsive reaction to capitalism; because I lied to create a poem-product; because I suspect the glitter of Diet Mountain Dew bottles in my wake is the inverse of sewing oneself a garment.

Saint Anne would never lie for palatability. *Garments Against Women* is a ferociously honest text that as much questions the value of writing poetry—that is, of manufacturing a product for public consumption, of using language to diagram reality, of peddling, of accounting, of asserting usefulness or meaning—as it is "poetry" as it's currently defined.

Perhaps it's philosophy, or essay. It defies genre not as a trendy model but because it's intrinsically defiant. It's paragraphs, mostly. ("I am writing to you in a long paragraph so that I will not be pornography.") Regardless: it traces an idea as much as it is a book of poems. It's an affirmation of negation: of removal or de-affiliation, a radical refusal to participate. It tries to find "the edge of the electrified grid."

It is a book of poems because the gestures and concerns are shattered and variegated and the reader is not spoon-fed to satiety. These include poverty, shopping, motherhood, illness vs. wellness, the nature of happiness, Internet communication, and the American Midwest. They're tinted with wry humor and deployed via a sentence-by-sentence torsion of logic until pummeled to a conclusion that's both startling and exactly where we began. "Subjectivity will be convulsive."

Boyer writes: "I sew and the historical of sewing becomes a feeling just as when I used to be a poet [...] and that thing—culture—began tendriling out in me, but it is probably more meaningful to sew a dress than to write a poem." Sewing underpins text: stitching is akin to writing; a pattern transforms flat cloth to a mutable object akin to a book; every garment holds thousands of hours of women's lives. The struggle is the process: the failure of skillfully, ethically clothing a mutable, vulnerable body comprises the labor that composes the product.

As all poets know, language is the master's tool. Still, declaring the death of poetry (as poets always have) quickly becomes tools standing around postulating. Boyer marks language's failure to transmit perception, which thus hints at its use as a mechanism of dominion and underscores the imperative value of the ineffable, of

multiplicity, of talking, which does or does not lead to writing, of working, which does or does not lead to writing, of hours stolen from employers. She says, "I would like to not know how to write, also to know no words.[...] history dwindles."

Practicing the futile, hidden labor of sewing or poetry necessitates accepting inattention and ugly hidden seams. It begets reckoning with the consumption inherent in embodiment (e.g. mortality, privilege, capacity). Hours stolen to read Boyer's work bolster the reader exponentially.

*Nina Puro is a poet, human, and member of the Belladonna\* Collaborative. She has two forthcoming chapbooks and has received fellowships from the MacDowell Colony and Syracuse University.*

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**Ron Padgett**  
**Alone and Not Alone**  
**Coffee House Press**  
*Review by Rijard Bergeron*

Every once in a while  
it occurs to me  
that I am a vibration  
as hard as a living creature  
and that creature is me.

Ron Padgett reminds me in *Alone and Not Alone* that thought can have a place and that metaphor can have a changing function within it. That place is by default plural and dependent on thought, and that both of those things are only temporary variables navigating through the situation (or poem) at hand. Padgett is a poet of transcendental lucidity and he makes it appear real easy. Just a stone's throw in whichever way. His voice, or his tone in this work, arises from how he writes straight through the threshold of memory, ebbing between contemplation, reflection, and a kind of simple explanation of a moment in time. There is a lot of time in his poetry. Time that's celebrated, time that's exhausted, fragmented, elated, and time that's looked at hard. Like going to the bathroom, looking at yourself in the mirror and asking, why am I here, then shrugging the question off, almost quicker than it has time to pass from one ear to the other and saying, well, I look alright! The feeling I get as a reader of Padgett's is a feeling I get from time to time, when I'm not reading at all. A kind of having and losing, like a day. Like from his poem "Survivor Guilt":

It's very easy to get,  
Just keep living and you'll find yourself  
getting more and more of it,  
but it's a good idea to keep a small portion  
for those nights when you're feeling so good  
you forget you're human.

So what's so easy to get? Well, the stuff that's thrown around inside your head all day. Padgett's writing does a good job of sorting those things out. He combines the seriousness that comes with questioning one's self and wit, to both reassure himself and the reader, that it's okay—Everything. Feeling joy while also feeling insecure. Thinking about death over a breakfast danish. The cuteness and recollection that the presence of a child can bring to the table. Or a moment that has you flying out of your body, into an incredible fiction and back again, only to feel old. Padgett can't escape his past, but that's a good thing. Some of his poems, like "For A," start off with a color, or a bird or something that triggers a memory he willingly lets pass through him, bringing the reader along from beginning to end on a train of thought that goes from the tip of his skull through the city and back again to the page. It's surprising how much history is in this book. He was an important part of one of America's most vibrant community of poets. His friendships with Brainard and other poets are still present in much of his work—just as present as an old item of clothing or an old phrase his grandmother used to say.

Padgett is not after awe. Most of the poems are simple in their use of language. His work is easy to read and his craft—direct. This is a Padgett trademark. "Reality has a transparent veneer / that looks exactly like the reality beneath it. / If you look at anything, / your hands for instance, and wait, / you will see it. / Then it will flicker and vanish, / though it is still there." He presents you with something ordinary, refracts it, then shapes it, makes it beautiful, or ugly, or glorious. His poems are a prism. His way about the body of a poem creates an enormous sensation of space. It feels like a safer space, maybe because Padgett's writing makes me feel safe, or perhaps because I don't feel anything risky. Regardless, it's I space I can swim in deeply, or sit in, with others on a train. It's a space like a room, where everything has a point, even if the point is vanity, but like all the rooms I've ever walked through, the floor is most important. His work is grounded, like a good listener. He is a good listener, the best kind, especially to his own thoughts. His work is, as a whole, without purplish tone—frank, with a fantastic youthful grace. His poetry is a human experience, plain and simple, one which manifests itself from nothing. He assures you that existing outside a realm of certainty is a necessary thing. We are a "Smattering of gray puffs [...] / a cloud / a powder of stone / from which a city arises / with people in it / and ideas / that flow toward and through you."

*Rijard Bergeron is a POET who has been and is constantly educated by other writers, artists and friends. He lives in Brooklyn.*

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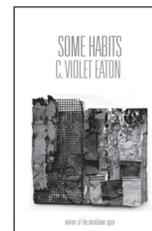


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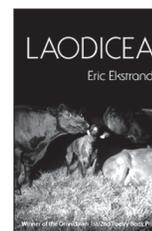
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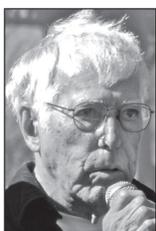
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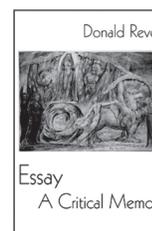


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## Monkeys, Minor Planet, Average Star

Gracie Leavitt

Nightboat Books

Review by Sara Jane Stoner

Gracie Leavitt's *Monkeys, Minor Planet, Average Star* is a book of organic, erotic density, poems of nonce phenomenology, philosophical problems as landscapes, taking logic, taking the human and its centrism, taking the literary into the earth and the water (as they are, rich and variously ruined) and where they meet.

Even as sometimes its sturdy iambic and long lines rush you, this book benefits from a slow read and a gentle curiosity, as certain phrases and words might appear as "poetry," but with a little digging, reveal themselves as keying into a variety of discourses. Leavitt's "Paradox of heap" poems cite by their titles a philosophical quandary in which a heap of sand, reduced grain by grain, must still be considered, even as it comes to a solitary grain, a "heap." Singularity and multiplicity and time and labor and decay are nested in this metaphor, and in this book, in a way that drives Leavitt's poetics. Excerpted generously between the book's sections, R. Buckminster Fuller delivers colloquial physics that verges on the spiritual. And Godard is here too, who frames the book with his hip delay that gently, cinematically points to how improvisation in art (in survival) can bring us up from below the ground. Both positions the human in Leavitt's text, show us to her anthroposophic ambitions. I tend to obsess over the question of how much a book constitutes an action and/or a thing; what it does to me and/or what I can do to it. The vocabulary of Leavitt's thing, Leavitt's action is broad and pointedly particular. Here is "Paradox of heap, circa 1929" in its entirety (one sentence):

Was once one weakly brook turned creek  
by which we kneel since could not ford  
within dense boxwood hid as they did from  
Malvolio, daft, as dunnage drifts to shore,  
to daylong jaw of her, your kisscurl love,  
a cutpurse strung all tissue skirt, off-white,  
gloam come through, cleft, wind-clung,  
tunes curb to shrub we ease apart or reach  
among, and clumsy tickle trout, together  
rubbed and gripped, wet upon peignoir  
rumpled with noon-dull on which its vitals  
spill in which you'll later gentle fold her  
meal, that yonder moll, your kisscurl love.

This poem, like the book as a whole, is thinkable as a "sward," a word she uses that describes the surface layer of ground that contains a mat of grass and grass roots; and also as a "loess," the unstratified accretion of clay and silt deposited by the wind; and as a manifestation of the phenomenon of "long shore drift." Self, persons, and poems, things and actions, are revealed to be matters of accumulation, as inseparable from the "natural" world of the anthropocene as they are from language.

It might be impossible for me to describe the extent to which this is literalized in Leavitt's poems. On the other hand: consciously, humanly, I believe I take in one word at a time. But the manner of Leavitt's poems suggest that I might need to download them into me all at once. Something of the glorious and terrifying simultaneity we experience as beings exists here. The density of these poems is confounding data—the poems progress with a rate of swerve (like Rosemarie Waldrop's "splice of life," but so accelerated) that suspends subject and object, for what feels like an indefinite duration. Line by line and sentence by sentence its language surges in a way that seems to blow the "literary" on its own (Shakespearean?) terms.

A substantial subject of the book is girls, is young women, is young women who are suicides (there are beautiful hard elegies to Emma Bee Bernstein, whose self-portrait "invites" and "condemns" the reader to the book from the cover, and to the poet's friend, Katherine Craig) but to call this subject that, to use those words, is to do a disservice to how Leavitt composts her subjects as a writer. Everyone and everything seems to be dying and growing at the same time, gently succumbing to decay, and rising out of it. But what might be called "girl," what might be called an "Ophelia," and this figure's relationship to whiteness and the literary, continues to crave work and contestation.

The section titled "Fifth-Grade Ophelia," so thoroughly epigraphed, is a stunning space in which the forces conspiring in/on/around/through/under/about the "girl" as concept, as value, as body, as representative of "a disintegrating social totality" (Tiqqun via Reines), are tenderly and violently registered and felt, Leavitt's high diction driving a fraught empiricism back onto itself, buckling up and soaring down. This poet is a gracious and gutsy student of the overwhelm of living, and of what happens when death is wholly given to, by the book's subjects, its eco-ephemera—what does this knowing on the part of the girl do to literariness? While at the same time how the book seems to want to elide death: "a new sentence is a sentence between two sentences." How the book wants to claim the inevitable inheritances that spring from language to language, earth to earth, person to person, death to life. So much love in this, such appreciation of the homiest and the most cosmic detail, such an ambiguity of value. What this Ophelia asks, with and maybe past Shakespeare's, is what happens when she knows how she is "importun'd," pressed upon, demanded of, drawn down by the world, and more than that, what happens when she refuses to not know this as a human condition.

# Community Letters

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*“Readers are invited to contribute information interesting relevant or useful to poets and friends of poetry” (PPNL #1, 1972)*

*This letters section of the newsletter is open to the community. If you would like to share a letter, please send it to [neditor@poetryproject.org](mailto:neditor@poetryproject.org) subject line love/hate. This issue’s letter is from San Francisco poet Kevin Killian.*

## Love Letter to Koff

Dear Koff,

I’ve been working with a Raymond Pettibon drawing, a square of bright, lifesize male genitals, to create portraits of a wide variety of men—filmmakers, poets, musicians, artists, curators, even an academic or two. The work in my project Tagged investigates masculinity and reveals it as a product of overdetermination, something socially constructed as important but in practice, maybe not so much. My models are showing it off, forgetting about it, mangling or distorting it, upset about it, dreaming without it; the pictures are variously bleak, comic, angsty, charming, surrealist, and community-oriented. The project is both a diary of my life from month to month, of the men I can talk out of their pants, and a memoir of my life as a gay male subject driven by his genitals’ commands, and now in middle age I wonder why and how all of this occurred. In my mind I harken back to earlier models, to the great physique photographers from Bob Mizer through Paul Mpagi Sepuya, but because of my bead on poetry I think often of you, Koff Magazine (1978-1980) and how you came to photograph so many poets as naked as you could get them.

In the 70s, in the circles of poets and artists around the Poetry Project, there was a lively culture of Xerox and mimeo magazines and more poets than you could shake a stick at. It was the heyday of second wave feminism and the poetry we remember from that period is often likely to have been by a woman, by a Bernadette Mayer, an Alice Notley, a Sonia Sanchez, an Anne Waldman. Women held down a certain number of institutional poetry positions—Waldman was the director of the Project, Mayer and Eileen Myles followed her; but still, just like today, the scene was overrun by men, and they published proportionately more than the women. Men edited these magazines, owned the presses, ran the reading series, decided who would be published, etc. It was exactly the state of affairs that Michel Foucault described in *The Order of Things*, “The fundamental codes of a culture—those governing its language, its schemas of perceptions, its exchanges, its techniques, its values, the hierarchy of its practices—establishes for every man, from the very first, the empirical orders with which he will be dealing and within which he will be at home.” In such a setup the actual rules seem transparent, invisible, they don’t have to be visible, they are that ingrained in the populace who lives under them.

In a spirited riposte, Elinor Nauen and Maggie Dubris, later joined by Rachel Walling, began to issue you, Koff, in 1977. The talking point was in the centerfolds of nude male poets in their circle. Issue #1 had Lewis Warsh, Issue #2 the late Paul Violi, Issue #3 came with a pull out nude calendar with twelve guys in it, including Bill Berkson, John Godfrey, Bob Holman, Tom Carey, Joel Oppenheimer, even Charles Bukowski. In recent years the feminist impulse behind your reversal has been celebrated by some of the young women poets interested in the 70s. Eileen Myles then loaned her complete run of you to Cassandra Gillig, who has made superb scans of the naked photos available to researchers. Gillig, who is co-writing an oral history sort of account of the years Ted Berrigan and Alice Notley spent in Chicago, became interested in the Holy Grail of Koff studies, the Hemingway’s suitcase, the one that got away.... This was the photo of Ted Berrigan that one of the editors came away with after a meeting, but lost it somehow on the subway, and he wouldn’t pose again. Koff, is this true, did this really happen, or is it an anecdote to which I say, “When the legend interferes with the truth, print the legend”?

As an homage to you, Koff, my current iteration of Tagged re-stages all the photos you printed in the 1970s, using all new models—well, I’ll try to get the surviving models to shed their clothes one more time, but a few have already turned me down. The late Paul Violi was your most striking model maybe, taking a pose harkening back to the early days of photography and to the idea of the “world’s most beautiful man.” Eugen Sandow. With a young poet in San Francisco whom Violi had mentored late in life at the New School, we tried to recreate your picture by posing him next to it, underneath it. He is Aaron Simon, and I barked orders at him like von Stroheim, “raise your right foot two inches, swivel your shoulder back forty degrees.” I kept glancing at Violi on the wall, and at Aaron against the wall, and trying to make the living man the model of the dead one. When his hips were positioned exactly so, his knees turned out like Violi’s, his gaze in a three turn, my iPhone started clicking almost by itself, for his cock stood at the exact prominent angle as that of the man from Koff. It was eerie, it was as though the teacher has come to life in the student.

Love, Kevin

udp fall 2015

see i lakes, or eyes?

*Or, The Ambiguities*

Karen Weiser

this is the way we eyes

clear the entering

*Distance Decay*

Cathy Eisenhower

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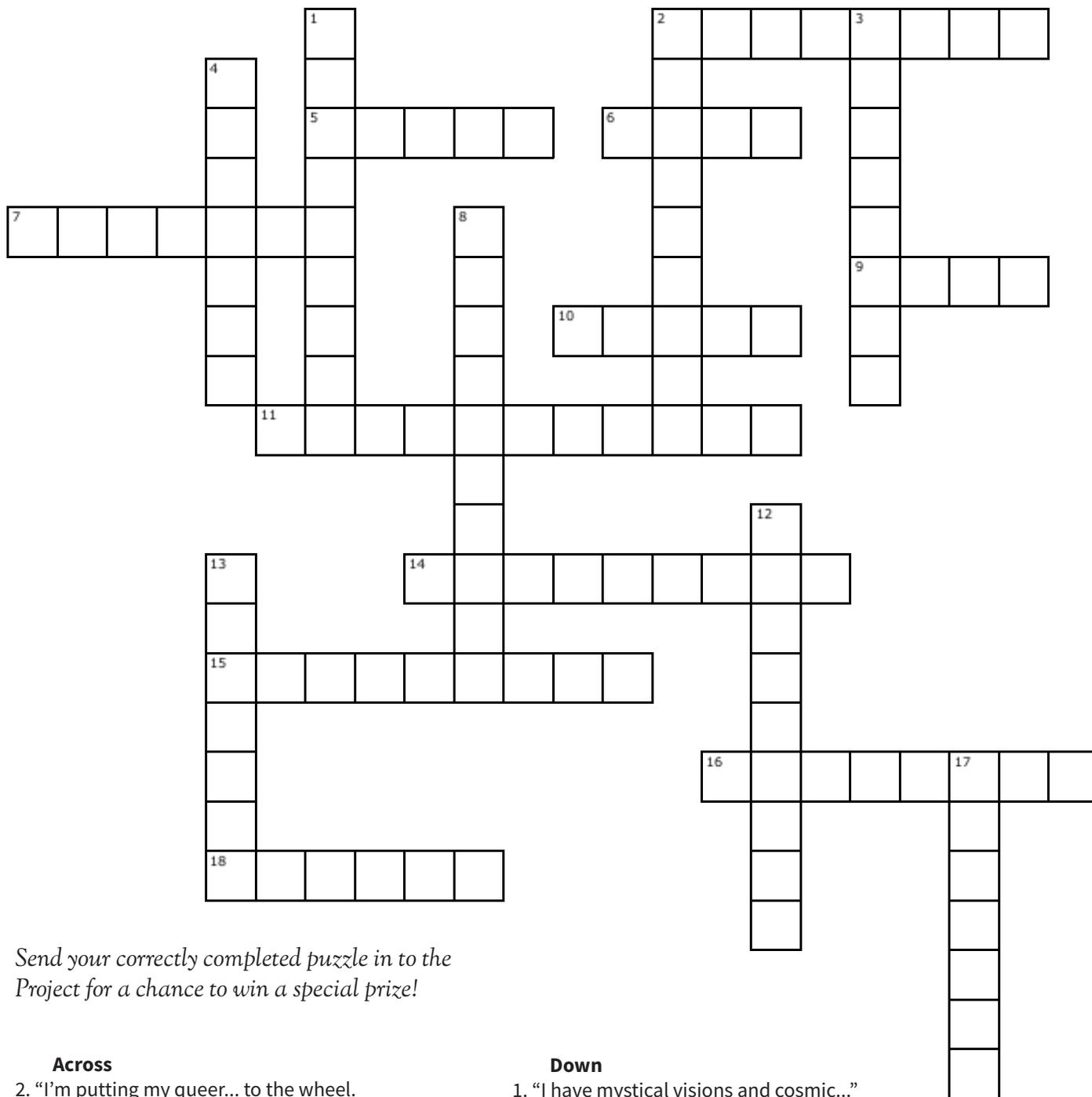
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# best minds



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## Across

2. "I'm putting my queer... to the wheel."
5. "wash out the... & Agent Orange"
6. "you should have seen me reading..."
7. "...I am the Scottsboro boys."
9. "I'd wash the Amazon river and clean the... Carib & Gulf of Mexico"
10. "I used to be a communist when I was a kid I'm not..."
11. "...hipsters burning for the ancient heavenly connection to the starry dynamo in the machinery of night"
14. "wipe up all the... in Alaska"
15. "Your... is too much for me"
16. "they... me, they want to see me dead"
18. "to sweeten the... of the sunrise"

## Down

1. "I have mystical visions and cosmic..."
2. "lava and ash of poetry..."
3. "no regret—no fear radiators... torture even toothache in the end"
4. "... in policecars for committing no crime"
8. "Skull on you! Gaunt immortality and... come"
12. "I saw the best minds of my generation..."
13. "I'm sick of your insane..."
17. "I say... about my prisons nor the millions of underprivileged who live in my flowerpots under the light of five hundred suns."

All answers are lines from Ginsberg poems: "America," "Howl," "Kaddish" & "Homework."



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