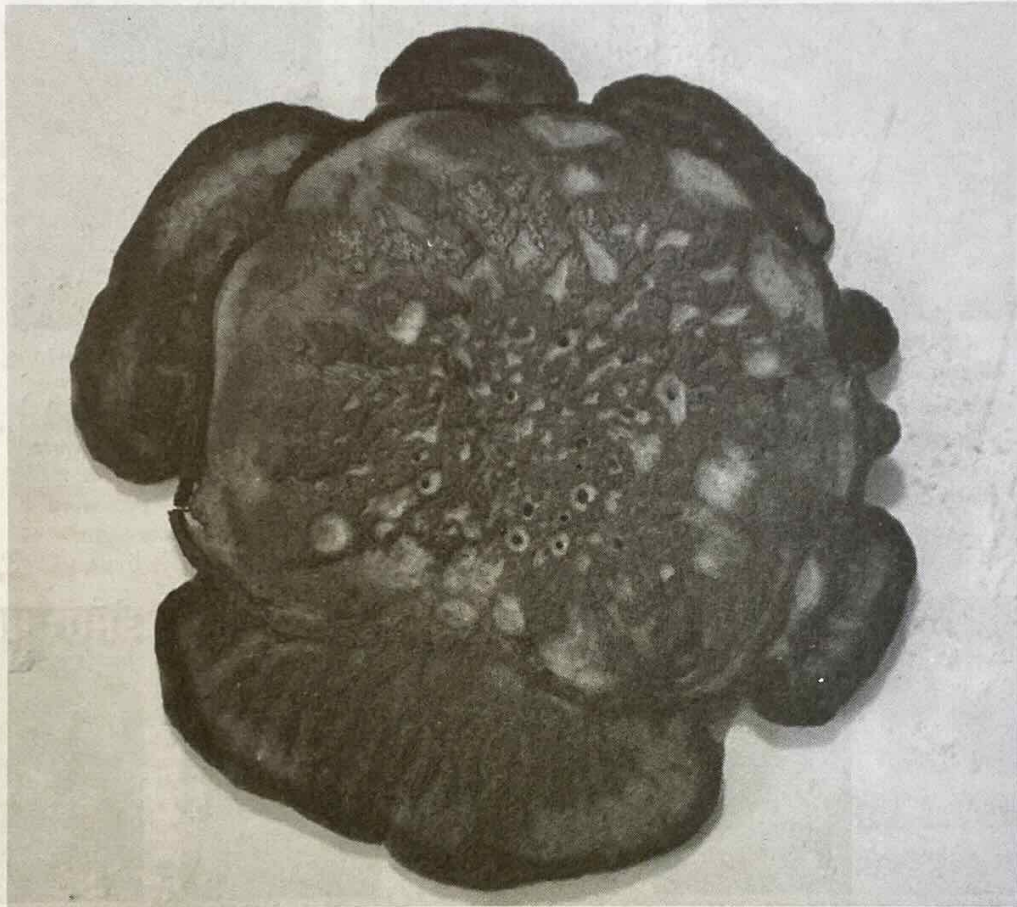

THE POETRY PROJECT NEWSLETTER

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ISSUE NUMBER 203 APRIL/MAY 2005



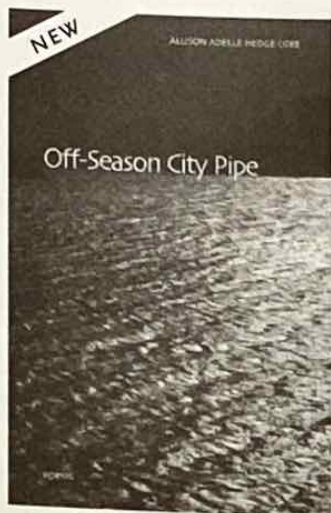
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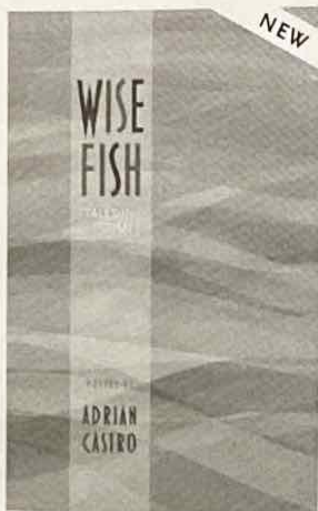


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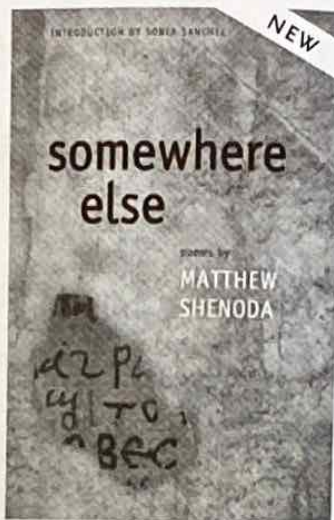
Off-Season City Pipe
Allison Adelle Hedge Coke

"What is presented in this evocative poetry is not a 'struggle for dignity,' but a dignity for struggle."
—JOY HARJO



Wise Fish: Tales in G/8 Time
Adrian Castro

"Wise Fish is composed solely in Spanglishcubanotainocreole y la lengua del orisha. . . . Open book, hear music."
—BOB HOLMAN



Somewhere Else
Matthew Shenoda

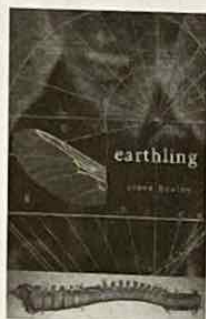
Introduction by Sonia Sanchez
"This book holds the keys to our present global predicament—each word is a star in our night."
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it was today
Andrei Codrescu



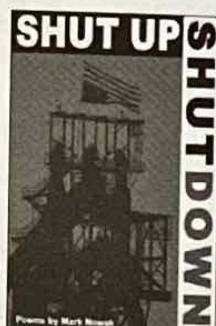
A Handmade Museum
Brenda Coultas



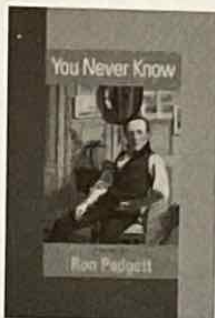
Earthling
Steve Healey



Murder (a violet)
Raymond McDaniel



SHUT UP SHUT DOWN
Mark Nowak



You Never Know
Ron Padgett



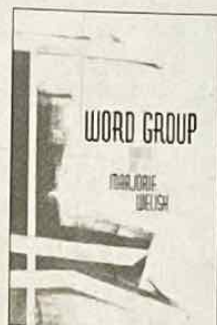
The California Poem
Eleni Sikelianos



Dancing on Main Street
Lorenzo Thomas



In the Room of Never Grieve
Anne Waldman



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Marjorie Welish



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ISSUE NUMBER 203, APRIL/MAY 2005

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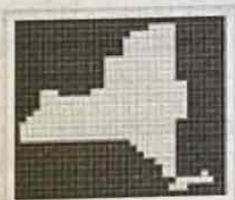
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COVER AND INSIDE ART:

Michel Durand, Papier Crêpe, digital photographs, 2005.

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Samuel R. Delany, Monica de la Torre, Mei-mei
Berssenbrugge, Anselm Hollo, Eleni Sikelianos, Brian
Evenson, Lisa Robertson, Claudia Rankine, Charles Alexander

WEEK FOUR: July 25 - 31

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Readers,

One of the more interesting aspects of Poetry Project readings this season, to me, is the ever-changing crowds that show up at each event. The 300 or so people who came to the Jackson Mac Low memorial on March 5 constituted a very different crowd from the nearly 100 that came to hear Amiri and Amina Baraka the Wednesday previous, and the 140 or so that showed up for the Urban Word Teen Slam just last night, March 7, bore little resemblance to either crowd or the crowd of 100-plus that came to hear Lyn Hejinian and Ted Greenwald on February 23. It is the beginning of March and we have already had more people come through our doors than during the entire 2003-2004 season (70 events then, 58 so far, with about 32 or so coming). It's not like we do light shows or have a bar or anything. Maybe people just like poetry readings a little better this year, but I doubt it.

These are just recent examples, but the fact remains that the Project, aside from a devoted handful of individuals, is drawing crowds that vary greatly from event to event. Now it's certainly true that audience numbers have nothing to do with the quality of the work, and if the programming is varied then the audiences should vary too. But the days of the Poetry Project as way station for a relatively small group of poets and artists are long gone (as are the days of the Project being much more heavily subsidized by the federal government, a fact you can stick in your irony pipe and smoke for a while). And this fact corresponds with the ever-increasing numbers of practicing poets in NYC as well as the entire country. There are more books and magazines, more readings and blogs, sites and discussion groups than ever before. And that's not even touching on the effects the proliferation of MFA programs and print-on-demand publishing have had on poetic productivity, so to speak.

So what to make of all this? I don't know. You tell me. Can you? I've got about 400 words here, and I don't want to make dumb claims about the direction or quality of contemporary poetry since every half-assed critic in the world is already doing so without the least bit of depthful thought. The mainstream media and larger publishing worlds are blind to this rise in productivity. It hasn't been mapped. Maybe it can't be. Maybe poetry's status as relative non-commodity

(and I did say "relative," mind you) is something that actually attracts people battered by the bullshit of American consumer culture. But for all the shit poetry takes—much of it from poets—people keep writing and distributing poems, giving, attending and putting on readings, editing magazines and publishing books. The distribution channels and lumbering publishers are failing, but the work continues to amass. Why?

Love,

Anselm Berrigan

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Re: the Michael Palmer interview in the Dec-Jan newsletter: I object to the phrase "current situation of Palestine and Israeli violence," which implies that violence is only on one side, as well as the term "ethnic cleansing" used at a San Francisco reading where an audience member asked an Israeli poet reading that day, "Do you get into trouble for your opposition to Sharon and the ethnic cleansing that's going on?" If the phrase "ethnic cleansing" does apply to the cycle of violence in the Mideast conflict, who is trying to ethnically cleanse whom?

In the poems and readings of my poet friends in recent years I've only heard support of the Palestinians and one-sided criticism of Israel. I don't think they're seeing the whole picture. Israel has a record of being willing to make peace with any country that's willing to make peace with Israel, such as Egypt and Jordan. Had Arafat accepted Barak's offer of statehood in summer 2000, a plan that covered 95 percent of what Arafat was asking for, it would've lifted the degrading conditions under which the Palestinians continue to live in an occupation that must end. But the decision to accept or reject an offer of statehood is not only in the hands of the Palestinians. Many other Arab state leaders have significant say, and they're largely demagogues who don't want a Western-style democracy in place in any Arab country. A Palestinian state, if an agreement were ever reached, would be set up with help from the U.S., Europe and Israel. That the U.S., Europe, and Israel would wish to establish a Palestinian government as close to Western-style democracy as possible is only logical. Arab leaders in power for decades cringe at the thought of their masses looking over at the Palestinians and saying, "They have real elections, social welfare programs, education for men and

women—we want what they have!" Protesting for a Palestinian state and then rejecting one when offered, Arab leaders have been able to keep the region destabilized and, if they can't topple Israel, at least keep the focus away from the unfair conditions in their own countries a while longer. The Palestinian individual, while getting a raw deal from the Israelis whom he can't stop hating, is the pawn of dictators whom he somehow can't manage to see through.

—Cliff Fyman, November 2004

THE FOURTH ANNUAL BROOKLYN ALTERNATIVE SMALL PRESS FAIR

will take place on Sunday, June 5th, from 2 to 8 pm, at Camp Friendship, 339 Eighth St., Park Slope, Brooklyn. Admission is free to the public and \$10 for participants (which will include small presses, self-published authors, electronic publishers, spoken-word audio recording publishers, poets, authors, performers, and more). If you're interested in participating (or *sponsoring*), contact Emily Brown, coordinator, at (718) 832-2310.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Anne Waldman! Anne celebrates 60 well-earned years of poetry, activism, and glorious being-hood on April 2nd. Check out the Anne feature at Jacketmagazine.com this month.

HELLO I MUST BE GOING

It's come time for me to bid adieu to the editorship of the *Poetry Project Newsletter* and by extension to you, *Poetry Project Newsletter* readers. I went into the editorship with the belief that the poetry community would make the *Newsletter*, and I'm pleased to report that I exit with that belief not only intact but strengthened. Whatever the *Newsletter* was these past two years—and I dare to hope that it stayed a papery place for and about poets, poets writing and talking to each other as poets and not as anything else—you made it so, O poets! Thank you for the book and chapbook reviews, essays and reading reports, interviews, poems, letters to the editor both public and private, and the kind words at just the right moments (i.e., right after the public viewing of the bimonthly Giant Typo). Anyway, I hope to see you more often, now that I'll have all this free time on my hands...

—Marcella Durand

READING REPORT

CABINET OF THE MUSES

Many an amazing performance graced the Cabinet of the Muses Festival organized by Liz Young with help from Julie Carr, Jessica Fisher, Karla Neilson, and Konrad Steiner, and held at various venues in the Bay Area October 21-23, 2004. In the abstract, these events intrigued even as they boded sensory overload from over 40 top-notch performances and screenings scheduled for the weekend. In practice, the festival's interarts approach made it utterly sustainable and sustaining.

Unlike a marathon event involving one art, during which attention can become uneven or fade, the juxtaposition of improvisatory dance, poetry, performance art, music, and film and video pieces in these considered programs made for fairly consistently riveting viewing. One of the festival's many pleasures, in fact, was the cross-genre and cross-disciplinary approach of so many individual pieces—Tony Coulter's cutting-edge, retrofit electronica and film piece, for instance, and the improv poetry by dancers composing and dancing their pieces.

Standouts for me were Henry Hill's spastic, syntax-destroying film *Radio Adios* and Helen Mirra's dreamy video *Schlafbau*, readings by Laynie Browne and Kevin Killian, Charles Amirkhanian's sound poetry, several gorgeous improv dance pieces—especially those including Ray Chung, who comes as close to conveying weightless-

ness as seems humanly possible—and David Buuck's '70s rock ballad-inspired songs from his two anti-war musicals *Hail Guantánamo* and *Operation Desert Survivor*.

The panel on translation held at UC Berkeley was also excellent. It included a talk and performance by Jerome Rothenberg, a short talk and reading by Laynie Browne, and two extremely sharp and interesting papers by Elizabeth Robinson and Juliana Spahr, not to mention an improvisatory dance piece at intermission by K. J. Holmes and Ray Chung.

Robinson's paper discussed Jack Spicer's "translations" of Federico Garcia Lorca's poetry and poetics, especially Lorca's concept of the *duende*, and the insistence in Spicer on the tenuous translatability of history through his construction of an anti- and supra-historical continuous present. Spahr addressed the politics of resisting translation in contemporary Hawaiian poetry, focusing on Joe Balaz's use of the materiality of poetic form to contest translation while toying with its forced necessity.

Overall, the festival was hugely enjoyable and inspiring—it would be a great thing if this were the first annual installment of a project to provoke further querying within disciplines and interarts development among them.

—Judith Goldman

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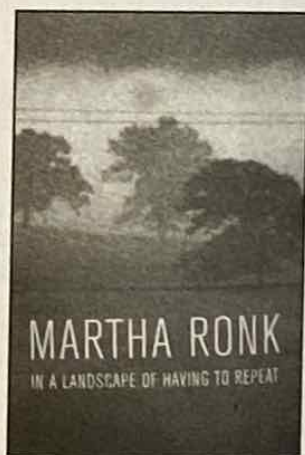
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THE LIE OF THE LAND/LIVE LIES

One can say that playing with words helps us understand the world we live in, to carve in language the mysterious lines of overwhelming emotions, to concentrate on language so it can open space to new meanings and the unfamiliar landscape of the mind, and bring us closer to the vital energy of life. Playing in a sea of words is always troubling partly because words get mixed up and confused, producing ambiguity, lies, and beautiful and unreliable metaphors; nevertheless, we still unexpectedly come up with a few sentences that matter enough so we don't let go of the notion of humanity even though history, etc., etc.

More eagerly than usual, I recently asked myself why it is that we do not react more to the enormities of lies surrounding us. Even though lies can now be produced with visual images, lies are mostly related to language. Like poems and novels, they are linguistic products; they result from inventing/telling stories and the sophisticated practice called rhetoric. They make their ways into the tissue of meaning and values that is part of our daily life. Some lies¹ have been so well integrated into language that they have become unrecognizable as lies, finding their ways into tradition, religion, and laws while brand-new lies keep redesigning patterns of behavior and pushing back the limits of ethics to the point that we don't know if they are lies or just "signs" of change.

The word fiction is related to *feign*, to *dissimulation* and to *lie*. Strangely enough, part of what we have called fiction (mostly narrative) is the effort made by the brain to interpret lies and to construct around their strange logic a narrative capable of defeating them or at least bringing attention to the wounds inflicted by them. Fiction has always been nourished by what society refuses to deal with in reality, forcing individuals to imagine what seemed to be beyond words and explanation in regards to desire, pleasure, sexuality, violence, death, science, and joy.

Fiction writers in fact reorganize the chaos of meaning created in them by what they first perceive in social reality as non-sense. But how does a society reorganize itself when lies and fake facts outnumber evidence and real facts? We probably need a new concept to discuss the daily flow of lies surging in, not only as an assault but mainly as a *spectacle*.

We know for sure that what used to be called fiction, i.e., *the unnamable, the inexplicable, the inavowable* nourishing the dynamics of reality and *the mysteries of nature* (which we have tried to understand through biology, physics, and chemistry), has evolved inside a huge market, be it TV reality shows or the appropriation of the human genome and genes by the biotechnology multinationals and private

¹*Men are superior to women; women have no soul.*

corporations. On the other hand, fiction is coming back through the old-fashioned ways of religious mystification and its \$\$.

Suddenly, reality, plain and flat reality (little gestures and phrases of daily life), seems like an interesting truth superimposed on a background of artificial facts and images the same way fiction used to be seen as a three-dimensional moment of imagination amid the boredom and the mediocrity of daily life. In other words, it seems that *reality-live* is now as exciting as *incredible-inspiring* fiction used to be.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CAROLINE HAYEUR

We live in a society that seeks transparency (security cameras all over, reports on citizens, trials and inquiries, etc.) presumably to catch liars and cheaters. Society seeks transparency as if a secret were a lie. So why is it that we seem to be able to endure more and more lies around us? Is it because lies are being told at such an incredible speed that it becomes difficult to keep track of them? Is it because without noticing we have become used to living among them as advertising, disinformation, dissimulation, half truths, fake news, and fake facts, or simply because it has become more and more difficult to distinguish between real and artificial, original and imitation, copy and fake? Why transparency when it seems that the choices left are between a variety of fears, types of pollution, styles of guns, lawyers, and war over there or overthere?

So how do the beautiful jugglers of fiction/reality that writers are manage to deal with the simultaneous appearance of reality and of fiction that life has taken, as if to understand the world we live in requires that we learn to juggle with real objects and the holograms of those same objects. Or maybe the ability to juggle with the meaning of life was always there because of the nature of language: symbolic, metaphoric, and always virtual.

All that said about lies, I have asked myself if it is possible to lie in a poem, and why would anyone want to lie in a poem if by nature a poem is a whole with no other goal than to exist as a synthesis of desire, a pitch of intuition draft in language? At first, when I asked

THE LIE OF THE LAND/LIVE LIES

myself those questions I was sure that the answer would be *no* (and probably it is), but then I remembered James Merrill saying in his book *A Different Person* how for a while he wrote love poems using the pronoun *she* instead of *he* in order to hide his homosexuality. What an interesting grammatical "lie"! Did it really change the course of the poem? Would changing the pronouns after the fact produce the same effect as painting a room in a different color? Or would "the wrong genre in the wrong place" alter the poem's essence? Would starting the poem with *she* bring the poem somewhere it was not meant to go?

I have also wondered if we lie when a typing mistake occurs and we choose the "mistake" in order to produce a better effect. Is it a lie if one uses a word antonymous to the one first intended, thinking that it will create a surprising semantic effect, which of course has nothing to do with what was about to be written? In other words, is it possible that by adding interesting grammatical and syntactical lies for aesthetic or sensational effect (for spectacular effect), one is not writing anymore something that matters but is simply "performing a product"?

One more for the road. Left with no cruel metaphors to argue in favor of life

or play tricks to happiness when it sticks to oil profit, etc., etc.,
dans l'oeil du pro un tigre beau fit du bonheur un mot
l'or des sens fins entassés dans la blancheur du mensonge
lent relais de mirage et de rage, *one more for the road*, je disais
touchons dans le miroir à nos yeux de vertige
traversons le mot encore une fois guettons tout ça
l'immense vie

Born in Montréal, poet, novelist, and essayist Nicole Brossard has published more than 30 books, including Mauve Desert, Picture Theory, Lovhers, The Blue Books, Installations, Museum of Bone and Water, and more recently Intimate Journal. She cofounded and codirected the literary journal La Barre du Jour, codirected the film Some American Feminists, and coedited the Anthologie de la poésie des femmes au Québec. She is the recipient of the Governor general (two times), le Grand Prix de Poésie du Festival international de Trois-Rivières and le Prix Athanase-David (the highest literary recognition in Québec).

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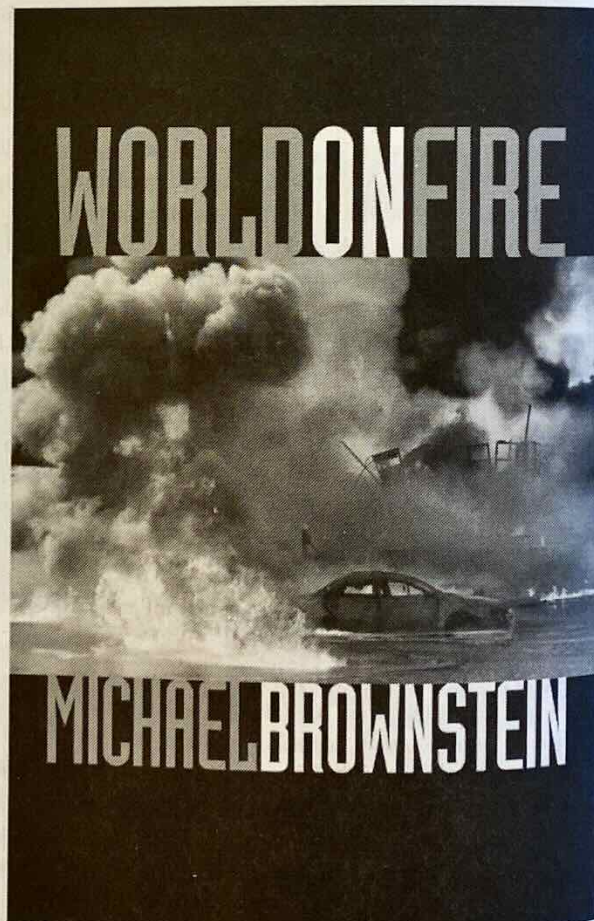
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—Joan Halifax Roshi, author of *Shamanic Voices*



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BY DAY

Oscarine Bosquet

satur in summer

To unaccomplish enough programs in one it would take me whole days to make a single magnificent day
to articulate its limits in a newspaper collectively

Rosa William Shônagon the student and me etc.

so beautiful a day to come so infinitive

our tastes in all weather the singsong day

under day over

we

will

we

walk.

To consult Marc-Antoine Julien's biometer

a line by day

lineofday thread walkwewillweoverdayunder

each crammed up to the enjambment of a margin the other

started since the eve the next day corrects the use

of time from left to morning in dayverdurous evening

It will take me

programs and diverse codes

to write from memory to find a form even if

the diary lacks form p56 (my) night

Amiel July 4 1877 a preoccupied laziness a ghost

of intellectual activity it takes solidifying the days page by

the parts of the morning morningtime mornout noon night dayplacing

the contents of day in mon tues wednes thurs frid satur sun

in summer autumn winter spring same april may june

that is twelve Saturdays to unaccomplish for only one to describe.

sund in summer

read yesterday's daily

sunday june 29 1788 a terrible storm we went to we hid
under a yew and then she toldme in a low voice . . . I believe that I dont need
to writeit I'll rememberit

I dontremember where Papua is nor New Guinea nor Toshkent Singapore
the Celestial Empire Saint Helen Andorra Luxembourg the
Malaymelanemicronesia.

I keep the diary of a private evidence of what happens to him
in the daily I name that which I dontremember that of which
otherwise I will lose all trace

I dontremember what the dailies that I read don't speak about nor what
they cite as significant events I dontevenremember to have one day heard
about it I don't remember wanting to engage myself I don't know where
I haven't been between the place where I was and the place where I thought
to go there was a continuous railway connection without a train

I dontremember where the frontline where the men fall who fall I
dontremember of what we have the right to speak of about them

I dontremember much I must have lived the whole
time without being elsewhere either I would remember it.

"By Day" appeared first as "Par Jour" in the French Journal *If* in 1993 and is
forthcoming as a chapbook with Duration Press in 2005. Oscarine Bosquet is the
author of *Chromo* (Fourbis, 1996).

The translators of "By Day," Sarah Riggs and Omar Berrada, are part of Double
Change (www.doublechange.com), a bilingual reading series and web journal
devoted to contemporary French and American poetry and poetics.

RON PADGETT

Lifts Off

WITH EDMUND BERRIGAN

From Tulsa teenager publishing the likes of Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, Robert Creeley, and others in his *White Dove Review*, to close collaborator with Joe Brainard, Ted Berrigan, and Dick Gallup, Ron Padgett has cut a swathe across the floor (or ceiling, depending on where you stand) of contemporary poetry.

At first read, Padgett's poetry might seem cut-up, but the lines leap from shining bar to shining bar, setting themselves ablaze and then landing (maybe) at their starting point, blinking at you while animated characters point and chuckle in the background. Other poems are not so comic, as some leaps defy imagination for unsettling conflicts of memory and mortality.

Recent years have seen Padgett venture into the past with prose recollections of Berrigan (*Ted*, The Figures, 1993); a biography of his father, Wayne Padgett, a well-known bootlegger in Tulsa (*Oklahoma Tough: My Father, King of the Tulsa Bootleggers*, U. of Oklahoma, 2003); and, most recently, his memoir of longtime friend and artist Joe Brainard (*Joe: A Memoir of Joe Brainard*, Coffee House Press, 2004). Padgett's other books include *You Never Know* (poetry, Coffee House Press, 2002) and *The Complete Poems of Blaise Cendrars* (translations, U. of California, 1993). I caught up with Ron Padgett this winter at his East Village apartment, where we discussed, among other things, these recent forays into history and memory.

—Edmund Berrigan

Edmund Berrigan: I've been thinking about four of your books: *Joe*, *Oklahoma Tough*, *Ted*, and *Albanian Diary*. They're all memoir or biography to some degree. What is it about prose that appeals to you when you deal with something like a memoir? For example, why didn't you write *Joe* as a long poem?

RP: I'm fairly traditional: most memoirs or biographies are written in prose. Not all, but most. Ed Sanders wrote a long poem that is a biography of Allen Ginsberg. Writing *Joe* in prose gave me more room to make the kind of structures that I thought would be too hard to do in a poetic form. Also I didn't see the point in having line breaks in what I wanted to say. The language in *Joe* doesn't dance, because I didn't want it to. I wanted to make boxes.

EB: *Ted* lends itself to that kind of dancing.

RP: A bit, yes, but only insofar as the sequence of the little boxes in *Ted* could be rearranged, which is not true of a chronological book such as *Joe*.

EB: Did your structural decision for *Joe* consciously come out of writing *Ted*?

RP: No. Both are memoirs about close friends of mine, but I think the resemblance ends there. Writing the book about *Ted* probably gave me courage for the more extended and complicated book that *Joe* is. But at the outset any decision I might have made was an unconscious one. When I first started writing the book about Joe, I didn't know that it was going to be a book about Joe. I intended to

write down, as clearly as I could, salient moments that came towards me from my memory—somewhat the way Joe wrote his "I remember" entries. I vaguely expected the piece to run to 50, 60, 70 pages. Later I felt that I needed some biographical glue for these fragments that were accumulating, so I made a timeline and started researching, and then the whole thing took off. I had a tiger by the tail.

EB: It does seem to be a cross between a memoir and a biography.

RP: That's exactly what it is, which might trouble people who like to classify things neatly, because it is neither a full biography nor a memoir. I don't mind. Besides, I was writing from both those points of view.

EB: *Oklahoma Tough*, on the other hand, functions a lot more as a biography. Do you think the writing of that influenced the impulse to make *Joe* more biographical?

RP: Probably. Writing the book about my father required a lot of research—mostly interviewing people in Tulsa—to discover things that otherwise I wouldn't have known. I enjoy research. It's intellectual detective work. It was a lot of fun and a lot of hard work, with some emotional ups and downs. Eventually it became somewhat exhausting, so although I was enormously happy with having finished such a demanding project, I didn't think I would have enough energy to write another book like that. In both books the moral responsibility weighed on me,

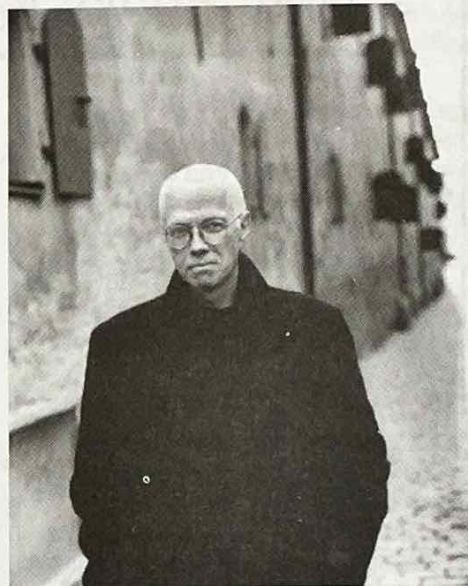


PHOTO OF RON PADGETT BY ULLA MONTAN, 1998

because I was not only expressing my view of things, I was also making a representation of the world, saying, in effect, "This is the way it was." Of course everyone could write his or her own book and come out with a different picture, but since there was no other book about Joe's whole life, I felt that I was the only game in town at the moment. I tried to make it as accurate and true and honest as I could, because that's what he would have done.

EB: I suppose the research for the two books was quite different. Did you have to go back to Tulsa for any special research for *Joe*?

RP: Very little, because I knew Joe's friends a lot better than I knew my father's friends. To put it more generally, I had a far better feel for the personal universe of Joe than I did for the personal universe of my father. And I had immediate access to Joe's letters and other documentary material. A lot of the research I did on my dad involved official archives: court documents, the Tulsa newspapers' dead files, and FBI files.

EB: Did you encounter much resistance from the FBI?

RP: They were very resistant. Under President Reagan the revisions to the Freedom of Information Act made it possible for the FBI to withhold more information than in the past. After a year and half the FBI sent me 1,300 pages on my father, 99 percent of it blacked out with a magic marker. It looked like a Fluxus book, almost every word marked out! For example, one sentence began

New Books from Hanging Loose Press

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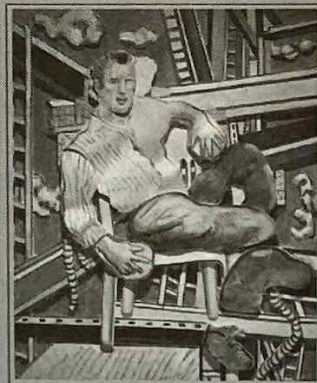
Hanging Loose Magazine #86

Jack Anderson, Hettie Jones, Tony Towle, Charles North, Gary Lenhart, Kimiko Hahn, Wilma Elizabeth McDaniel, D. Nurkse, Janine Pommy Vega, Chuck Wachtel, Rebecca Newth, Tom Savage, Kurt Cole Eidsvig, many others. Art by Paula North. \$9.

And keep in mind....

Pansy Maurer-Alvarez, *When the Body Says It's Leaving*, paper \$14, cloth \$24. **Mark Pawlak, ed.**, *Present/Tense: Poets in the World*, paper \$16, cloth \$26. **Jacqueline Lyons**, *The Way They Say Yes Here*, paper \$14, cloth \$24. **Stephen Beal**, *Suddenly Speaking Babylonian*, paper \$14, cloth \$24. **Arnold Mesches**, *The FBI Files*, paper \$30. **Rafael Pérez Estrada (translated by Steven J. Stewart)**, *Devoured by the Moon*, paper \$14, cloth \$25. **Rosamond S. King, Charles Russell, Marie Carter, Robert Hershon, eds.**, *Voices of the City*, paper \$14. **Terence Winch**, *That Special Place: New World Irish Stories*, paper \$14, cloth \$24.

BLUE COLLAR HOLIDAY



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Art by Larry Rivers

Jeni Olin, art by Larry Rivers Blue Collar Holiday

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"Wayne Padgett's mother is named—" and the rest was deleted. In other words, they were withholding from me my own grandmother's name! There were a number of such instances. A civil liberties lawyer told me I had grounds for an appeal, because the FBI had exercised "excessive zeal in the lack of disclosure." To my surprise, the FBI granted my appeal, and after another year the 1300 pages came through again, this time with only 80 percent marked out. But the new 19 percent was illuminating, and this time they accidentally left in some things they were supposed to have deleted.

EB: How did you move from being the son of a bootlegger to being a poet?

RP: It's not as much of a jump as it might seem. In the Oklahoma milieu I grew up during the 1940s and 1950s, being a poet was considered very unusual, something that people didn't do in that society. That is, poet equaled outsider. That's what my bootlegging father was, an outsider. He did pretty much what he wanted to do his entire life, even when it meant going against the grain of society. I suppose I had a similar willfulness, and I must have felt entitled to be rebellious, like him. The difference is that I was bookish and intellectual, and had the advantage of an education at an Ivy League college. But in high school I'd already decided to be a poet. If my father were alive and in this room today, you would see resemblances between us. The bootlegger vs. poet dichotomy would seem less compelling, because there's a lot more to a person than whether he or she is a poet or a bootlegger.

EB: Is poetry still exciting and outlawish for you now?

RP: No, I don't think of poetry as being outlawish at all. Not in the least.

EB: Really? Don't people still look at you strangely sometimes when you tell them you're a poet?

RP: Not so much, because I'm older now and I look serious. I'm not a skinny teenager that people think they can push around. I'm bald and gray and 62—that is, I can look "mature." People ask, "Have you published any books?" And I say 10 or 12 or whatever, and they act impressed. Then I look for the nearest exit. But poetry doesn't seem outlawish at all to me, because vast numbers of people from every culture have done it throughout history. I happen to be one of those people. It's a big deal only if you buy into the cliché of poet as oddball.

EB: When did you start to read poetry?

RP: More or less simultaneously I discovered two books, *Howl* and *Leaves of Grass*. I had read a poem of Whitman's in school, "O

Captain, My Captain," one of his worst poems, which made no impression on me. But when I found *Leaves of Grass* and read "Song of Myself," wow! Very quickly after that I discovered the Beat poets and the Black Mountain poets, and some New York School poets. One day the owner of the best bookstore in town said to my buddy Dick Gallup and me, after we bought a book by Camus, "Have you guys read Kerouac?" I thought he was speaking in tongues: "Kerouac" was like a mysterious phoneme to me. The owner recommended *The Subterraneans*. Soon afterward Dick and I read *On the Road*, *The Dharma Bums*, and *Dr. Sax*. I immediately ordered the City Lights books—Corso, Ferlinghetti, Marie Ponsot, Jacques Prévert's *Paroles*—anything they published I would buy.

EB: So this would be '59?

RP: About '58. The bookseller also recommended e.e. cummings and T. S. Eliot. Anyway, the floodgates were opened, and I found *Evergreen Review* and devoured it, and I pored over the ads in the back for small presses, I subscribed to magazines such as *LeRoi Jones's Yugen*, and I discovered *New Directions*—Pound, Williams, Lorca, Kenneth Patchen, and Rimbaud, among others. So my literary reading outside of school was *City Lights*, *New Directions*, and *Grove Press* books, with some *Modern Library*, *Doubleday Anchor*, and *Meridian* thrown in.

EB: What kind of influence did Kerouac have on your writing?

RP: He showed me, I think more than any writer I'd ever read, even more than Allen [Ginsberg] and Whitman, that writing can be exhilarating. The pleasure of that rush of linguistic energy was like driving for the first time in a really fast convertible with the top down. For a while I imitated his style, which was fun. I had been a maudlin, introspective, quiet writer. I'd always think about what I had to say, and then bear down on it. At its best my writing was sensitive, at its worst it was sodden and self-important. But I was just a kid, what the hell. When Kerouac showed up it unscrewed the car doors at 120 miles per hour.

EB: I wanted to ask you about individual poems in *You Never Know*. "Not Particularly" struck me because the first line, "Out of the quarrel with life," reminds me of my dad's poem "Tambourine Life," which has the lines "Rhetoric/ is what we make/ out of our quarrels/ with others// out of/ our quarrels with ourselves/ we make poetry."

RP: By the way, I wrote some of the lines in "Tambourine Life." But in the case you mention, my line wasn't based consciously on Ted's. Sometimes I will have a phrase in my

head, with no idea where it came from. Sometimes it'll be from a poem I read and forgot, or sometimes from a poem of my own. Or from anywhere. It is a line or phrase that the poem will generate itself out of. Then years later I'll be reading John Ashbery or Andrew Marvell, and, O no! There's that line! I see my using it as an unconscious form of respect to the original source.

EB: What I liked was that whereas Ted says, "Out of our quarrel with ourselves we make poetry," you said "Out of the quarrel with life/ we are a whirlwind of invisible whirs that/ go around a statue by Giacometti." I thought that was a great substitute for "make poetry." It just was poetry!

RP: I like that poem. It's not really a poem by me, and I like that.

EB: How's that?

RP: I mean it doesn't sound like me.

EB: This first poem "Morning"—

RP: That's not by me, either.

EB: Really? Who wrote all these poems?

RP: I did.

EB: I found the poem kind of spooky. Was it launched out of memory, or a feeling?

RP: Yes, it's about my parents.

EB: And this strange wooden Indian that gets set ablaze.

RP: Isn't that weird? I remember writing this. It was morning, I was in my little room in Vermont. Sitting there, I sensed a presence in the room. I don't mean to sound mystical, but occasionally you look around and someone is standing in the doorway, or the dog is there. The feeling wasn't scary or spooky, just a slight intuition. I started the poem, "Who is here with me?" Then, somehow, I don't know how, the answer was "My mother and an Indian man." The third line is "(I'm writing this in the past.)". The use of the anachronistic word *Indian* suggested that the setting is anterior to that of the moment of composition. But it turned out that this Indian is not a man but a statue, apparently a cigar store Indian, a thing that used to be fairly common. The statue brings with it the association of wood and smoke, and then the scene is discovered to be prenatal. "Morning" was an interesting poem for me to write because I didn't give in to my penchant for humor. There are several spots in this poem where I came to a fork in the road: I could have gone down *Comedy Court* or *Straight Arrow Lane*. Something made me avoid *Comedy Court*.

EB: "Album" also struck me. It ends: "They betray us, those molecules, we who have loved them. They treat us like dirt."

RP: There is some humor there, but not much.

EB: How did you decide to avoid the comedic route?

RP: First, I tend to be wary of doing the "Ron Padgett thing." Not being mercurial or witty was one of the main things I could do to avoid writing a "Ron Padgett" poem. It's like, okay, you've got a curveball, a slider, and a change-up. But do you have a fastball? And can you throw it right down the middle of the plate at 95 miles per hour? If you are as multifaceted as you always claim you are, why aren't you showing that in your work? What is the reflex that tends to shunt you into the comfort zones of the comic imagination? So I try to write—at least sometimes—against my own grain. Second, things that seemed funny when I was young aren't as funny now. *You Never Know* has an elegiac tone, but it has funny things in it too. How about this: try writing a comic elegy. In the years just before the poems in this book, both of my parents had died, as well as a number of friends. When my parents died I spent a lot of time looking at family photographs, which, by the way, can be good for writing because they have details in them, and when you look at them with a magnifying glass you sometimes see things that you never noticed. Also, photographs are so evocative of a moment, and if you can project yourself into the scene, like having been there when the picture was taken—even if it was before you were born—it's wonderful. Hence the title "Album."

EB: On a different note, I've read that you've had an interest in Woody Guthrie. Was that because he was from Oklahoma?

RP: Partly for that reason. His hometown, Okemah, isn't far from Tulsa. He was about ten years older than my parents, and he wrote songs about things that my grandparents experienced. "Tom Joad," for instance, could almost have been written about my relatives, but, unlike Steinbeck's characters in *The Grapes of Wrath*, my people stayed in Depression Oklahoma. I felt a close sympathy for the people in his songs, the poor, the uneducated, the powerless, the underdogs, because most of my relatives were like that. I loved Guthrie's children's songs, too. Also, he could be very wry and ironic, even in his political songs. When I was 16 or 17, for me the two poles of folk music were Woody Guthrie and Leadbelly.

EB: What about Leadbelly appealed to you?

RP: His sheer amazing natural force. What an unstoppable driving energy, with that

12-string guitar and the occasionally complicated fingerings. Talk about a wall of sound! In those last sessions that Alan Lomax recorded, Leadbelly casually tears through his vast repertory, song after song: from "Alabama Bound" to "Goodnight, Irene" to "Hitler Blues," with its staggering first line, "We're gonna tear Hitler down," as if Hitler was a building! I loved Leadbelly's voice. The accent, the rhythm, the intonations were very similar to those of my relatives from Arkansas. This is going to sound weird, but he felt like a relative.

Around the same time, I discovered modern jazz—Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Dave Brubeck, Gerry Mulligan, Monk. I more or less happened onto classical music when Dick Gallup joined a mail-order classical music club. The first time we listened to the *Brandenburg Concertos*, I fell on the floor laughing. Bach seemed incredibly far out. But before all that I was surrounded by the cowboy swing and big band music my mother loved, and of course early rock 'n' roll and rhythm 'n' blues: Jerry Lee Lewis, Little Richard, Gene Vincent, Chuck Berry, Fats Domino, Bill Haley and the Comets, Little Willie John, just tons of people, followed by Lightnin' Hopkins, Blind Lemon Jefferson, Big Bill Broonzy, and Muddy Waters. You get the picture.

EB: It's been a crazy millennium, politics-wise, especially here in New York. Have you written about that at all?

RP: Yes, I have, but with little success. Over the years I've marched against the bomb, the Vietnam War, and other things, but I assumed that I did not have to immerse myself totally in politics or social issues because there were enough people who were going to set things right in this country. They were burningly interested in doing so. I was burningly interested in writ-

ing poetry. The country would go off course, and then the people I admired would put it somewhat back on course. But in recent years, the country is not being put back on course. As part of the generation that has allowed this to happen, I feel responsible, hence angry with myself and guilty. I've always had an enormous problem with writing a decent political poem. In the last couple of years I've had the feeling that I must try to do this difficult thing. One recent poem, of seven or eight pages, contains overtly political statements. Not just about politics, in the narrow sense of the word—let's call it world management. To say that I'm dismayed by the recent history of our country is a radical understatement. If I weren't able to practice a certain kind of daily focus, I'd be seriously depressed. Giving money to Howard Dean and the Democratic Party, signing petitions, marching at the UN are not enough. Most of my life I've been congenitally optimistic, but the scales have tipped now. Of course our country isn't the only problem, but I don't see any national leaders in the world addressing the situation in a meaningful way. Periodically I go off to Vermont for months and live without a TV or a newspaper, to keep myself from going completely bonkers thinking about the world mess. Okay, there *are* other reasons for going there. My hope is that the mental state I maintain myself in will allow me to do something helpful. Of course there's more than a little vanity in such a notion. Anyway, I'm going to do what I can—in politics and in writing—but who knows what that might be? Things have become more than a little spooky here. You have to wonder, who are all these barbarians who are running the country, and why are so many people panting and drooling along behind them?

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EB: Some of them have been there for years, like Cheney. But media manipulation is an unquestionably negative influence, because people don't get all the facts, or much analysis of the things these people say.

RP: Another remove from that is that even when people *are* given facts, if they can't think, the facts have no effect whatsoever. I have a relative who's a knee-jerk conservative. He believes in the abolition of gun control; he thinks the invasion of Iraq was great. When presented with facts, his mind takes them, puts them to one side, and goes right around them. He can't understand what the facts are telling him, he can understand only what he *wants* the facts to tell him. And if the facts don't tell him that, he gets some other data—any bric-a-brac that sustains his point of view. You can't reason with someone who can't think straight.

EB: How long did it take you to translate *Complete Poems* by Blaise Cendrars?

RP: I'm glad you changed the subject. The Cendrars work stretched over decades, because it was never a concerted effort. The first time I translated his poems was in the spring of 1966 in Paris. The Paris editors of the *Paris Review* were going to publish an interview with Cendrars, and they wanted to include some poems alongside it, so they invited me to translate some. I said, "I don't know his work that well." They said, "Go out and buy his *Poésies complètes* and see. And send us the bill." Oh goody! I found that some of the poems were both cute and translatable. That got me interested in Cendrars. Over the years I would wander back to his poems and translate some, such as his long poem, "The Prose of the Trans-Siberian," which already existed in a number of English versions. One of the best was by John Dos Passos, but its 1920s diction had gotten a little stale and it had a couple of bad spots. Then I translated a group of poems called *Kodak (Documentaries)*, composed entirely of found poems. I wish I could have located all of his sources, but I could find only some of them.

EB: It's fascinating to think of translating what someone found, rather than what they wrote.

RP: The things he found were mostly from French sources, although at one point he quotes from Captain Cook's journal. Cendrars wrote it all in French, but if I'm translating I should really go back and find the original English he's quoting from and just use that. Such literary research can get pretty heavy. It was because someone else had done the legwork that I then took on a very challenging book of Cendrars's called *19 Elastic Poems*, a collection of "cubist" poems. Fortunately a scholar named Jean-Pierre Goldenstein found out just about everything about these poems, which made it much easier for me to understand how to translate them. Then an editor at the University of California Press asked me if I would like to translate all of Cendrars's poems, something I had never intended to do. But there I was, having done 80 percent of them, so I set about translating the other 20 percent and going back and reworking some of the 80 percent. During this period I got to know some terrific scholars in the Blaise Cendrars International Society and I went to Switzerland and France to work on the translations with Cendrars's daughter, as well as with others. I really got into it, and we produced a book that I like.

EB: Is translating like writing, does it have those kinds of discoveries?

RP: For me translating is like revising. You change the original creation, and then you go back and change *that*. In the initial translating phase, yes, sometimes there's a bit of the lift-off that occurs in spontaneous original composition. Often when I'm reading a piece in French, I just read the French. Other times, I'll read it and ask myself, "What would that be in English?" Then other times it just flies off the page into English by itself. That's the lift-off.

CONSTRUCTION

**He was as stiff as a board
and as hard as nails**

**are not really similes,
they are clichés,**

**which means we hear them
as single units whose meaning**

**we already know, unless
we have never heard them before.**

**If we add
He was as big as a house**

**there appears the image of the man
using his own body and spirit**

**as building materials,
adding story upon story**

**until the architecture of the house
and the architecture of language**

**both collapse
like a ton of bricks.**

Ron Padgett

POETRY PROJECT EVENTS CALENDAR

APRIL_MAY 2005

APRIL

4 MONDAY

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

6 WEDNESDAY

Diane Glancy & Kit Robinson

Diane Glancy's books include *The Shadow's Horse*, *The Relief of America*, and *Primer of the Obsolete Rooms: New and Selected Poems*, forthcoming from Salt Publishers. Kit Robinson is the author of *9:45*, *The Grave*, and 15 other books of poetry. This event is funded in part by Poets & Writers, Inc.

8 FRIDAY

The Ultimate Battle: Poets Versus Rappers

Hip-hop collective The Blue Room presents "The Theater of the Assimilated Negro" and celebrates the release of Avra Kouffman's book of poems, *Lush*. Co-curated by Arracadabra Productions. [10:30 pm]

11 MONDAY

Summi Kaipa & Sasha Steensen

Summi Kaipa is author of two chapbooks and the play *Tripfych: Three Stories of Desi Women*. Sasha Steensen is the author of *A Magic Book*, recipient of the 2004 Alberta Prize (Fence Books).

13 WEDNESDAY

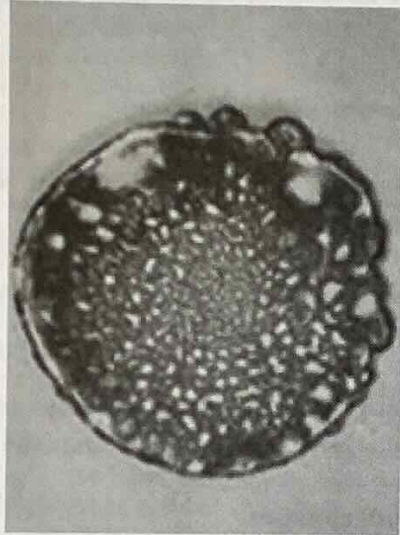
Cole Swensen & Jo Ann Wasserman

Cole Swensen is the author of nine volumes of poetry; her latest book, *Goat*, was a finalist for the National Book Award. Jo Ann Wasserman is the author of *The Escape*, published by Futurepoem in 2003.

15 FRIDAY

Poetry Game Show

Douglas Rothschild hosts with adjudicators Joanna Fuhrman and Erica Kaufman. Also featuring a slide presentation by Cathy Haman and live music by Bethany Spiers. [10:30 pm]



25 MONDAY

Alan Gilbert, "Next to What?: Siting Poetry Now"

An overview of current topics in contemporary poetry, such as: poetry and politics; documentary, the absurd, and the grotesque; and other trends. A collection of Alan Gilbert's critical writings, *Another Future: Poetry and Art in a Postmodern Twilight*, is forthcoming from Wesleyan University Press.

27 WEDNESDAY

Andrew Joron & John Yau

Andrew Joron's latest book, *Fathom*, was selected by the *Village Voice* as one of the Top 25 Books of 2003. John Yau has three books forthcoming: a collection of essays, *The Passionate Spectator*, from the University of Michigan; *Ing Grish* (with drawings by Tom Nozkowski) from Saturnalia Books; and *Andalusia* (with art by Leiko Ikemura) from Weidle Verlag, Bonn.

29 FRIDAY

Total Eclipse of the Heart

Kundiman, a literary non-profit serving Asian American poets, presents the prom everyone has been waiting for: Ultimate '80s fabulousness features poets, dancers, a DJ, food, and libations. [10:30 pm; \$35 in advance from www.kundiman.org, or \$50 at the door/\$30 for members.]

MAY

Poets gather to celebrate the poet and literary curator of The Burnt Word Reading Series. With Guillermo Castro, Marcella Durand, and others. [10:30 pm]

16 MONDAY

Tsering Wangmo Dhompa & Richard Roundy

Tsering Wangmo Dhompa's first book of poems, *Rules of the House* (Apogee Press), was a finalist for the Asian American Literary Awards. Her new book, *In the Absent Everyday* is forthcoming from Apogee. Richard Roundy is the author of *The Other Kind of Verigo*. [7 pm, Third St. Music School, 235 E. 11th St.]

18 WEDNESDAY

Caroline Bergvall & Edwin Torres

Caroline Bergvall's works include *Eclat* and *Goan Atom, 1: Doll*, as well as the sound-text installation *Soy: "Pansly"* at the 2004 Liverpool Biennial. Her collection *FIG (Goan Atom, 2)* is due out from Salt in 2005. Edwin Torres' books include *The All-Union Day Of The Shock Worker* and *Fractured Humorous*; his CDs are *Holy Kid* and *Novo*.

20 FRIDAY

Let the Sunshine In: Boog City Presents An Evening of Hair

Some of New York City's best musicians reinterpret the original Broadway cast recording of the musical *Hair* as part of Boog City's floating Classic Albums Live series. [10:30 pm]

23 MONDAY

Ronaldo V. Wilson, "Hand/Eye/Coordinates"

An exploration of the relationship between drawing and tennis as vehicles that can inform writing; in what ways do the hand and eye work together? Ronaldo V. Wilson's poetry and prose have appeared in *Callaloo*, *Fence*, and *Interim*, among others.

25 WEDNESDAY

Pansy Maurer-Alvarez & Tonya Foster

Pansy Maurer-Alvarez's first collection, *Dolores: The Alpine Years*, was published by Hanging Loose Press in 1996, and was followed by *When the Body Says It's Leaving* in 2004. Tonya Foster is the author of *A Stagger of Bees in the High Court*.

MAY

16 SATURDAY

Poetry Is News

Curated by Anne Waldman and Ammicl Alcalay and featuring Emma Zghal on "Cultural Genocide," David Levi Strauss on "Abu Ghraib," Peter Lamborn Wilson on "Classical Iraqi Poetries: Homage to the War Dead," and Betsy Andrews on "Bi, Gay, Lesbian, Trans 'Front'." Support investigative poetics, imagination, sanity, and cultural activism! [1 pm; free]

18 MONDAY

Craig Dworkin & Stacy Szymaszek

Craig Dworkin's newest books, *Strand* and *Parse*, are forthcoming later this year. Stacy Szymaszek is the author of *Some Mariners, Mutual Aid*, and *Pasolini Poems*.

20 WEDNESDAY

Ed Sanders & Aram Saroyan

Ed Sanders' most recent books are *America, a History in Verse, Vol. 3 (1962-1970)* and *Tales of Beatnik Glory*, recently published in a single volume. He is currently at work on *America, a History in Verse, Volume 4 (1971-1985)*. Aram Saroyan's early books of minimal poetry, *Aram Saroyan and Pages*, can be read online at ubuweb.com. His prose books include *Genesis Angels: The Saga of Lew Welch* and *the Beat Generation and Last Rites*, a book about the death of his father, William Saroyan.

21 THURSDAY

UniVerse: World Literary Voices

Co-sponsored by PEN and Rattapallax as part of PEN's World Voices Festival of International Literature, and featuring Joan Margarit Consarnau, Bei Dao, Martin Espada, John Godfrey, Dunya Mikhail, Elena Poniatowska, Elif Shafak and Oksana Zabuzhko. [9 pm; free]

22 FRIDAY

Bjorkstra

Travis Sullivan's Bjorkstra, an 18-piece big band interpretation of Bjork's music, featuring the songs "Army of Me," "Human Behavior," and "It's So Quiet," among others. With guest poetry performances by Edwin Torres and others. [\$15, \$12, \$10]

2 MONDAY

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

4 WEDNESDAY

Clark Coolidge & Michael Gizzi

Clark Coolidge's recent books include *Way Out West, Alien Talters, On the Nameways, Bomb* (with Keith Waldrop), and *Now It's Jazz*. Other must-haves include *Space, Open Face, Mine: the one that enters the stories*, and *At Egypt*. Michael Gizzi's many books include *No Both, My Terza Rima*, and *cured in the going bebop*.

6 FRIDAY

No Chance Ensemble

An experimental poetic novel run amuck, *The Continuing Journey of Belinda and Mark* takes a serial couple, aided by "The Guide," through the paces of their post-avant literary relationship. With writer-performers Bruce Weber, Bob Hart, and Joanne Pagano Weber, and music by guitarist Nelson Alkndr. [10:30 pm]

9 MONDAY

Rusty Morrison & Ravi Shankar

Rusty Morrison's collection *Withering* (The Center for Literary Publishing) received the Colorado Prize for Poetry in 2004. Ravi Shankar is currently poet-in-residence at Central Connecticut State University and a founding editor of *Drunken Boat* (<http://www.drunkenboat.com>). His book, *Instrumentality*, was published by Cherry Grove Collections in 2004.

11 WEDNESDAY

Eve Packer, Cheryl Pallant & Jackie Sheeler

Eve Packer is the author of *skulls head samba* and *Playland* (both from Fly by Night Press). Cheryl Pallant's books include *Into Stillness* and *Uncommon Grammar Cloth* (Station Hill Press). Jackie Sheeler's books include *The Memory Factory* (Buttonwood Press), which received the Magellan Prize and *Off the Cuffs: poetry by and about the police* (Soft Skull Press).

13 FRIDAY

The Blue Woman: Memorial Reading for Micki Siegel

27 FRIDAY

Under Hypnosis: An Evening of Persona Poems and Music

Poets Dean Kostos, Marry McConnell, Sharon Olinka, and Robert Priest channel historical figures and mythologies in an evening of verse paired with Kevin James' selections from New York's finest headlining composers. [10:30 pm]

30 MONDAY

Lars Gustafsson & James Meetze

Lars Gustafsson's most recent books are *En tid i Kanada* and *Dekamen*. James Meetze is the author of *Serenades* and *Instrument* and the publisher of Tougher Disguises.

JUNE

1 WEDNESDAY

Joshua Clover & Tan Lin

Joshua Clover's next book, *The Totality for Kids*, is forthcoming from University of California Press this year. Tan Lin is the author of *Lotion Bullwhip Graffiti* and *BlipsSoak01*.

3 FRIDAY

Spring Workshop Reading

Participants in the five spring workshops of Maggie Dubris, Robert Fitterman, Merry Fortune, Drew Gardner, and Patricia Spears Jones will read from their work.

6 MONDAY

Jim Behrle & Sarah Gambito

Jim Behrle's *She's My Best Friend* is forthcoming from Pressed Wafer. Sarah Gambito is the author of *Mataadora* (Alice James).

8 WEDNESDAY

Hilton Obenzinger & Chris Stroffolino

Hilton Obenzinger is the author of *New York on Fire, American Palestine: Meville, Twain, and the Holy Land Mania*, and *a*hole*, among many others. Chris Stroffolino is the author of *Speculative Primitive, Stealer's Wheel, Oops*, and *Spin Cycle*.

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Barbara Guest, essays on poetics
Laurie Reid, drawings

"...some poets, when they write criticism, produce a kind of prose that is itself on the verge of being poetry. Valéry, Stevens and Marianne Moore belong to this "visionary company." And so does Barbara Guest, whose writings on poetry, collected here, are among the most inspiring works of their kind. It is a deep pleasure to know that such writing can still exist."

—JOHN ASHBERY

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Barbara Guest, poetry
Laurie Reid, drawings

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The Electronic Poetry Review

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Yedda Morrison, poetry

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Carol Mirakove, poetry

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"THE ALGAE STAMPS IN THE HAND..."

Lila Zemborain

the algae stamps in the hand a marine alphabet
that becomes extinguished if the hands penetrate
the green like two symmetrical plants, palms that
push the water, tangled in the flaming vegetal
filaments; a compact green sifts the colors
golden while the sky segregates blue in the
advance; only the blue expands its firmness when
she turns and offers her back to the waves;
without horizon that limits sight, the clouds
approach the wake and then the body is just a
surface that extends itself towards the heights;
with her arms she'd like to reach the universe,
but the rhythmic flection towards the finish
submerges the gaze in a fleeting puddle, and
again the sky in the distance advances, but from
all of her expiration of air, she separates
herself from the nothingness that is the depths
of the skies

Lila Zemborain is an Argentine poet who has lived in New York since 1985. She is the author of the poetry collections, *Abrete sésamo debajo del agua* (Ultimo Reino, 1993), *Usted* (Ultimo Reino, 1998), *Guardianes del secreto* (Tsé-Tsé, 2002), and *Malvas orquídeas del mar* (Tsé-Tsé, 2004). She is also the author of a book-length essay, *Gabriela Mistral. Una mujer sin rostro*. (Rosario: Editora Beatriz Viterbo, 2002). "The algae stamps in the hand" was translated by Rosa Alcalá.

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BOOK REVIEWS

JOHN ASHBERY
WHERE SHALL I WANDER
Ecco Press, 2005, \$22.95

Friedrich Schlegel wrote to his brother August Wilhelm in December 1797, "I can hardly send you my explanation of the word 'romantic' because it would take one hundred twenty-five pages." Not to be outdone, John Ashbery has succeeded in just a hair's breadth over 80 with his new collection, *Where Shall I Wander*. Pardon the German, but *Wander's Frühromantik* stage design seems too careful to be the kind of red-herring citation we've come to expect from Ashbery. The cover features a reproduction of Caspar David Friedrich's 1832 oil, "Large Enclosure near Dresden." Marking the iconic German romantic painter's high point as a colorist, the work depicts a bend of the river Elbe as it diffuses into aimless patches of still water, each reflecting the vast gold and lilac striations of the sky at sundown. As your eyes adjust to the light, you can make out a lone ship rounding the bend, sure to be stranded as it drifts into the shallows. The fate of the ship, the deepening of the sky, and the sudden interruption of a median line of trees are all held to suggest that the painting is a meditation on death, or as Friedrich might revise, the departure of the soul, which would make the scene a rather grim riposte to "Where shall I wander?" Friedrich's title is no less wry: Given the near equal allotment of canvas to sky and ground, which, in fact, is the "enclosure?" Is the horizon a "large enclosure near Dresden"? Are the heavens? Now as ever, playing slidewhistle with scale is also a favorite *bruit* of Ashbery's—when he writes in "The Template," "It was like the Amazon, but on a much smaller scale," he could just as easily be writing about little inland Elbe.

Ashbery's interest in Caspar David is actually evidenced two collections earlier in "Humble Pie" of *Your Name Here*, wherein he addresses what must be a similar canvas: "Meanwhile the inevitable Casper (sic) David Friedrich painting/ of a ship pointing somehow upward has slipped in like fog/ surrounding us with vowels of regret... All this time the sun had its eye on us/ as it was going down. Finally, when it hit the horizon,/ it had something to say.../ don't ever let me catch you on this planet again./ Fine, but on what token shore/ are we to be misted?" It seems Friedrich's signature twilight melancholia had breached the poet's work prior to the window-dressing of *Wander*. And if we bring this awareness that Ashbery was already attuned to Friedrich's rhyming of twilight with grief and passing into our reading of *Wander*, we

can't help but be struck by the admonition closing its inaugural poem, to beware "the shadow that comes when you expect dawn." And thereafter follows a steady flicker of twilight imagery whose urgency never seems to diminish: "Cathexis arrives early in a golden coach," "This is an invaded country./ Dawn will abdicate all your book," "The last client/ before dawn was seen at a certain/ distance," "decided not to bring dawn yet not yet down/ the first big stairs." The book's dimmed lights go on, but that last quote drops us on the landing of what might be the book's central vanishing point, "Hölderlin Marginalia."

Here he is then, Friedrich's writerly counterpart, the master of *romantische poesie* whose late visionary free-verse poems and fragments are held by some to be prophetic, postmodernism *avant la lettre*. Hölderlin was quite the wanderer himself, travelling great distances, even trans-alpine, always by foot and alone. Where shall I wander, indeed. His "Past and Present" reads: "In younger days I greeted the dawn with joy/ And wept at dusk; while now, in my older age,/ I start my day perplexed with doubt, but/ Sacred and gay is to me its ending." Again, Ashbery's admonition increases its depth of field. "Hölderlin Marginalia" is a masterful meditation which pins its ethic of beauty to an ethic of freedom. The essence of *Frühromantik*, according to Hölderlin's old friend Friedrich Schlegel, is its "becoming." And this romantic celebration of becoming, of process over event, hardly foreign to Ashbery, here animates the poem's open form in a mode reminiscent of *The Tennis Court Oath*. Now the book's title becomes a statement. 'Where' is where I shall wander.

Hölderlin was also famous for his modulation of tones, a feature which surely endears him to Ashbery. And, lest you be put off by this skirt through the black forest, all the poet's familiar tonal shifts are used to masterful effect throughout *Wander*. It just wouldn't be Ashbery without the toy orchestra, equal parts *märchen*, *policier* slang, and "language of the heart." Recitatives of Woolworth-era American argot ripple throughout, with particular force in the extended prose poem, "Coma Berenices." On that note, a return to extended prose (including the title poem itself) is one of the book's unexpected pleasures.

A closing discovery. Caspar David Friedrich was born in Griefswald. Grief's wald? As in next stop Griefswald, everyone off? Next stop a large enclosure near grief's wood? Care for a dance? "Would I?" says Caspar. "Wood eye?" says John.

Macgregor Card co-edits *The Germ: A Journal of Poetic Research*.

FANNY HOWE
THE WEDDING DRESS
University of California, 2003, \$16.95
ON THE GROUND
Graywolf Press, 2004, \$14

Over the past two years, Fanny Howe has published three full-length volumes of poetry—*Tis of Thee* (Atelos, 2003), *On the Ground, Gone* (University of California, 2003)—and one collection of essays, *The Wedding Dress*. Even with all this new work, Howe remains difficult to place in context. While that's not necessarily a bad thing, it has created, in Howe's case, a sort of silence around the work; or, as one reviewer recently put it, "Fanny Howe's great but nobody has explained why."

The 10 compact essays in *The Wedding Dress* are a good starting point for readers curious about her influences (a list that includes Ilona Karmel, Thomas Aquinas, Thomas Hardy, Simone Weil, Edith Stein, her children, Boston, Catholicism, Hinduism, and fairies) and her intentions. Regarding the latter, Howe is particularly nimble in what is, for this reader, the book's center-piece, "Bewilderment"—in which she lays bare some of the reasons and ways she has pursued a life and a poetics possessed of an interior and alternative logic. She writes:

There is a Muslim prayer that says, "Lord, increase my bewilderment," and this prayer belongs both to me and to the strange Whoever who goes under the name of "I" in my poems...

It isn't surprising then, that Howe's readers might be "bewildered" when it comes to explaining her. And, as explaining a dream too cleverly will ultimately lead to disappointment, Howe warns "sometimes a surface reading seems to bring you closer to the intention of the poem." Or, more simply, "[n]o monolithic answers that are not soon disproved are allowed into a bewildered poetry or life." Rather than fitting neatly into any of the reader's possible sets of expectations (cultural, literary, etc.), her work contains "a dimension of plot, but a greater consciousness of randomness and uncertainty as the basic stock in which it is brewed." As Howe writes in the title series from *On the Ground* (though I wonder if we couldn't substitute "Poems" for "Dreams before waking" here):

Dreams before waking are eyes into the future where there is no Zurich but an alphabet beginning with Z

That said, *On the Ground* is a somewhat different sort of beast. With pieces titled "World

Bank" and "9/11," *On the Ground* is perhaps her most avowedly political book (no small feat considering the role social justice issues have played in her life and work). It becomes quickly apparent, however, that Howe is characteristically unwilling to play into the expectations such titles create. With some exceptions ("Young African American, broken/ on the back of St. John's Hill// for the sake of economics"; "In my experience// the angel with his wings up/ is trying to kill the dragon of history"), Howe allows the images to do the talking as opposed to editorializing the images she presents—presenting political matter without making it problematic by excessive intervention of ego—as in:

With unreal gentleness
Generals
mounted the hill
"Mind, now. Mud."

One sighed like a serpent on an empty egg
but it was really military thinking:

travel casket round trip

The poems present the issues as they really are: a series of complexities, stories with possible morals but no conclusions. Her poem entitled "9/11" does not invoke planes crashing and towers collapsing, but rather prods us through a chain of similes—"like winners taking the hit/ like looking down on Utah as if/ it was Saudi Arabia or Pakistan"—only to cryptically, but somewhat explosively, conclude: "like this, like that...like Call us all It/ Thou It. 'Sky to Spirit! Call us all It!'// The third person is a materialist."

While the way in which Howe manages tricky material brings about unexpected and refreshing results ("I'll never write a villanelle/ but a chorus of spirals// to muck up your wars"), the most memorable work in *On the Ground* occupies the uncertain space that less definite contexts (less definite than "9/11") allow. In serial poems like "Forged," "On the Ground," and "Kneeling Bus," her contexts (whether London or New York, the M11, or a hillside) are allowed to develop into their spirals of matter and spirit, stimulus and impetus:

Green leaves form shells
of white light not paper

Personality likewise imitates
fakery like this

Eclipse of the apocalypse head
on a circle likened to an "O they said
Earth is a good name for home."

As in her best work elsewhere, Howe shines when she is punning her way through the quirky imagery of a quirky world, letting the poems drift off into one another, or simply drift off like "Successive *deja vus*/ ended then

remembered/ overlapping since leaving/ the building materials of sequential plot."

Erik Anderson is the author of Incidentals 1-11, forthcoming from SuPress.

TED GREENWALD
THE UP AND UP
Atelos, 2004, \$12.95

I

Two days after Jackson Mac Low's death I visit Tom Raworth's blog at tomraworth.com and view his In Memoriam list of recently departed poets. It is stunning, sad. We have come to expect new generations of poets to continually arise. We fret and scrutinize the fresh cohorts as they form themselves up ... are there enough of them? What do they think they're doing? Why aren't they more, or less, like us?

But are we giving enough attention to those closer to the other end of the timeline? They are going; many have already left. How long will it be before the rest of them are gone? The back cover of Greenwald's beautiful book from Atelos lists all of his books and chapbooks, 28 of them. The first, *Lapstrake*, was published exactly 40 years ago—when Lyndon B. Johnson was still president and Robert Wagner was mayor. And giants of our particular world still walked the earth, pacing the pavements of Manhattan.

Greenwald said this to me once, "It is good to be the poet, until you are 35 or so. And then you just have to hang on until you are 60." I stuck that line in a poem. Greenwald, born in 1942, crossed that bar three years ago. It is our great fortune that he did, and that he is still with us and still writing.

It was a time when most poets weren't writing criticism or theory. I would suggest that Greenwald's career—so much of it now having laid out itself before us that we can see its shape—is one that takes us back to those days. While one could certainly argue that there is no consanguinity between the need or desire to write criticism and theory and what we can call the academic life, it does seem that Greenwald's life is one that argues that Poetry is about something decidedly different. For good or ill, I would suggest, it is a life that advocates fronting, privileging, and honoring writing above and before all else. Poems come first, come what may.

Greenwald writes in his book: "The iron law of poetry."

What does that mean? Could it be that this is a law, like the Second Law of Thermodynamics, that ineluctably describes what poetry will do to you? Poetry not as a set of decision-points, cynical or altruistic, enlightened or debased. Instead, Poetry as a

way of living. A choice one makes every day. A caution reminder: this work, this toil, has a moral purpose. A continual, continuous series of existential choices—the days and weeks and months and years of keeping one's shoulder to this wheel. That means something. Keeping on writing—that is an iron law of poetry. Perhaps it is *the* iron law.

Why? Because the poet has a job and a responsibility. Making the poems. Giving us back the world, making it make sense for us. Greenwald tells us no one else can do this work. It is vital and the world depends on it—even if the world seems to forget that.

II

The poems in this book are made up of indented paragraphs and page-wide lines. Inside each paragraph are disjunctive, disordered fragments; these units are three, four, sometimes six words long. There are verb phrases, noun phrases, bits of adjectival construction, lots of direct address and repetition. "Here is Here." Sometimes there are one-word units, sometimes we come across word lists—four or five words long, sometimes six to ten.

So much of Greenwald's earlier poetry was built around rigorous stanza structures. From the four-line stanzas in *You Bet!* To the six-line stanzas in *Word of Mouth*, to the three-line stanzas in *Jumping the Line*. The disassembled, reassembled, cut-up, fragmented language was simpler to digest with white space all around.

One of the distinguishing characteristics of what it means, or used to mean to be a New York poet was that in some way your writing arose out of this place where you lived. Is New York poetry less New York than it used to be? That remains for others to debate. What's beyond question however is how Greenwald's poetry is tied ineluctably to New York City, and always has been.

Those insistent, staccato, abrupt, abbreviated rhythms. The New York of a life spent on the block—the constant, unending, cascading progress of fictions, narratives, blow-by-blows that one sees, savors, stores up just walking down the street. Any street. Walking, driving, riding. "Traffic sounds like," Greenwald writes, "I like the bus." In the cab, on the train. The sights on the sidewalk, across the street, blowing past the display windows, fluttering down from the fire escapes. The phrasings and critiques offered by cops, cabbies, newsies, the guys pushing the garment rack, the girl who ignores the comments and the stares, the little kid with the knowing look, the wise guys who, once you know how to recognize them, are everywhere, lounging against the storefronts.

III

And then there are the exclamation marks. Would someone please write a monograph on the rise and fall of exclamation marks in modern American poetry? Don't we instinctively think of them as the tailfins of verse: useless, tasteless, overbearing, overweening? But that would be wrong. It takes a brave poet to wield one these days. Greenwald never stopped. As he writes here, "Believe it!"

The exclamation mark brings us back to where we started—to the New York School poets, and, of course the New York School painters, to a time and a place where the kind of enthusiasm, the kind of unalloyed expression that can only be appropriately denoted with an exclamation mark, regardless of the sarcasm with which it may have been deployed, was not a cynical or naïve exercise. Second, it brings us back to a time when the relations between the poetry world and the art world were far closer than they seem to be today. When the same exclamation mark you saw in a Lichtenstein print popped up simultaneously in an O'Hara poem.

Third, it reminds us of the central role Ted Greenwald has played in the evolution of our world. He is a tie, a reminder, a remnant and, a survivor of that long-gone wild, dangerous, unbound, frequently cruel and determinedly free world that boiled up—right here, in this church, on these very streets, in the '50s and the '60s.

Greenwald also has occupied a vital transitional position as the New York School, or part of it at least, transmuted into the Poetry Project scene and then continued to grow and evolve and eventually include much of Language writing and Language poets. He has been there, here, for all of that. The only question that remains is, are we listening closely enough to him and to those of his generation who are still with us?

Michael Gottlieb's latest book, *Lost and Found*, was published by Roof Books last year.

RUTH ALTMANN
ACROSS THE BIG MAP
United Artists Books, 2004, \$12

Anyone in New York out and about going to poetry readings is sure to recognize Ruth Altmann. She is a staunch attendee at the Poetry Project and other downtown venues (since 1965!). However, probably not many would know much of Altmann's own work as she has been modest and private, sharing it mostly with a coterie that includes writers Bill Kushner, Phyllis Wat, Be LaRoe, and Altmann's publisher, Lewis Warsh.

Across the big map collects poems spanning many years. Altmann writes in a generous

and disclosing tone: assertive, casual, confident, unafraid to directly address us. Not that she gives it all away. These poems allude to depths, the way a dragonfly might skim across a lake in Minnesota. Given her years of composing within a relatively intimate constellation, a reader might expect tightly worked, coiled private lyrics; however, these poems are written in bold, plain language. Altmann's writing is not coy or precious; her poetry does not work the territory of strange language. Fully engaged in the contradictions her rich life has provoked, her poems compress observation, delineate and comment in quick complex phrases that proceed vertically in most instances, stacking elaboration in pared-down American. The complication (is there such a thing as "plain English"?), as she writes in "German Lessons," is her home was trilingual—English, German, and Yiddish.

The minimalism and measure of Carl Rakosi, Maureen Owen, Kushner, and even James Schuyler come to mind. A great example of Altmann's art is "To the Muse." "God knows what/ you'll have me seeing and saying/ And when./ You're all over the place all the time,/ odorless, colorless, silent,/ like air." How wonderful to have this poem followed up by "Fredandginger" in which a tango-like rhythm is measured in a constricted vocabulary. Suddenly, a reader conjectures. Fred the muse to Ginger the artist?

Altmann indents stanzas irregularly, in Notley-esque elisions that snap one to attention, forming a small poem, like an island, inside the larger one. Longer prose poems expand her lines, cut off the light in a sudden quick move. In "Huron," "the little milk train slow poked across the land." In a New York School reverse, the poet leaves Manhattan Isle, goes ashore "across the big map," arrives in "Deadwood City," South Dakota. "I am drunk feeling no pain... I will learn that here bourbon is king the stuff of life the nectar of the gods. Maybe I have taken off the curse of being in New York."

This reader caught up with Altmann at the salon Chez LaRoe, which she goes to regularly, and on the phone before her trip out to Lake Tahoe. Altmann reveals that she was an art student at the Cooper Union. She's worked at prose since the '40s, studying literature at the Universities of Washington and Minnesota. The arc of inspiring contacts made with other writers is amazing. A student of Robert Penn Warren and Allen Tate, she also studied with Louise Bogan and Robert Fitzgerald, all the while working as a journalist and living as an independent, working woman in the Midwest. Once she returned to New York, she devoted herself to writing poetry, after taking a poetry workshop with Audre Lorde. Once she discovered the scene at St. Mark's Church, she

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—Bob Holman ISBN 0-9759197-1-7 \$15.00

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engaged in workshops with Bernadette Mayer, Alice Notley, and Maureen Owen, teachers whom she says encouraged her to immerse herself in language's derivations and to try all forms and varied subjects. "I realized poetry as something that created sparks ... flickering between people. My poetry changed a lot." The content of these poems encompasses "steel wool, an iron frying pan/ cool coins, green paper money." Antarctica, swimming, polar weather, romance (playing strip poker on a train), are pivots of the poems in *across the big map*. Altmann says that her main poetic interest has remained, i.e., the charge between people (she wrote her Ph.D. dissertation on Antony and Cleopatra). Yet, the charge is alluded to, not taken on directly. Residue of feeling animates these poems. The book culminates in the masterful "Things I miss." In an "I Remember" style, she details the transformation of the material (the body) life promises: "my black bathing suit, which disintegrated from use in a chlorine pool and almost floated away." In this way, loss is invoked, never pointed to as a big deal. Altmann's longevity as an artist and as an avid student of the arts is also no big deal. Interested and alert, the quotidian snap of "I miss Woolworth's—the comprehensiveness of it" gives us the "brass tacks" of small remembered gestures. She misses in no particular order "the 47th floor of the WTC ... doctor's house calls, hovering over my bed making taking my temperature ... and the Balmore Cafeteria." Altmann also misses her "glass bong" and the phrase *so long* which she so accurately prefers to *take care*.

Kimberly Lyons's *Saline* is forthcoming from Instance Press.

ANNE WALDMAN
STRUCTURE OF THE WORLD AS COMPARED TO A BUBBLE
 Penguin, 2004, \$18

"The fantastic stupa" at Borobudur in Java, Indonesia, is provocation and inspiration behind Waldman's new volume of poetry. She began the work during a long dreamed-of pilgrimage in 1997 and continued to work on it as an engaged meditation, following the stupa's architectural structure (steps and spiral) through the start of the Iraq war and its aftermath. At its core there is a play between enlightenment (of the pilgrim, of the bodhisattva) and the eternal mystery and ongoing suffering reflected in the story and physical reality of the Borobudur stupa. Built between 760 C.E. and 830 C.E., it fell into disuse and was only rediscovered in the 19th century, "When a government rest house that stood next/ to the stupa was destroyed during the Indonesian revolution/ Archeologists were

able to study the site and. . ."

Though the book reads as a walking meditation/perigrination, it also has three movements loosely following Dante's Hell, Purgatory, Heaven—a spiraling architectural structure that moves between prose and verse.

Over the first 37 pages, a frame is made of the world (as it is up-to-this-minute) and the challenge of positioning oneself as its scribe while following the path of "destruction of ego." Throughout a catalog of hells and suffering and observations of random divisions between human/animal and man/woman realms, there is poetry, concision, word play, and delightful interior humor: "Cell phones, it is reported in the dailies,/ Are scaring all the ghosts away/ Ghosts hungry for greater action." "Academicus horribilibilityus/ (I made that up in fury)/ Mave somethingbg up?" And ironies: "and so on so you build a text of stone/ and travel beside it as parallel universe, walk stop gaze,/ study the reliefs, panels of more aspiration/ a picture worth a thousand words?"

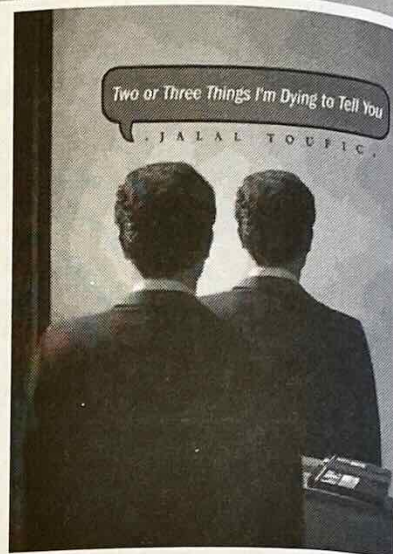
The book is most narrative in the middle. Here the poet, "Wanted to tell you a story..." following the "instructive reliefs" of the stupa, some of which were remade (retold) by well-intentioned architects. The poet retells the Jataka Mala, the births of the Buddha and ends the section with the "Steps of a Bodhisattva," in which the thrust is language, explorations, definitions, finding directions.

Waldman accomplishes an open alliance between the bodhisattva path and her radical poetic and activist determination. Upon my return to NYC after studying with Waldman at Naropa, I was introduced as a "Naropa" poet. However, Waldman's influence is one that works against being a "Naropa" poet or a Waldman disciple. To be a disciple of the author of *Structure of the World Compared to a Bubble* is to be a poet who is "here to disappear." In this marvelous volume, Waldman not only makes a "vow to poetry," but bows toward dedicating her life, commanding herself to be aware against "Bowing to flattery, addicted to response/ ... A false note..." and to stick to what's "Difficult to accomplish: jangkawa"... "Meditation in action: again, again/ Working with other people/ and performing miracles/ but not turning oil in to blood." Like Notley's masterpiece, *Disobedience*, it upholds the complexity of being human in the entire bubble-shaped world that it confronts. However, Waldman leaves her readers with a sense of provisional hope, conditioned by our participation in making the possible world possible.

Rachel Levitsky is the founder of *Belladonna**. Her current project is called NEIGHBOR.

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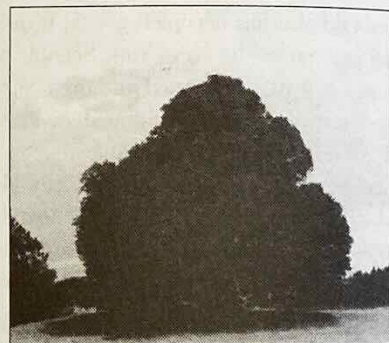
I, a mortal to death, am dying to tell readers and myself about diegetic silence-over, which produces a dead stop and reveals the occasional natural immobilization of the living as merely a variety of movement.

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BRENDA IJIMA
AROUND SEA
O Books, 2004, \$12

Poetry isn't easy to come by. You have to write it like you owe a debt to the world. In that way poetry is how the world comes to be in you.

One virtue of Iijima's poetry is that (like all poetry worth reading (reading)) it slows us down. Poetry makes us pay attention. Things (of necessity) get caught and held.

black woodpecker

white tufted tyrant fly catcher

in the

[tree tops

Perception stretches across the universe. It's what the universe is. It's what we are. We're instants of perception.

Eat an apple while you read this. It's that time of year as I write this.

The poems look on the page the way that they sound. Pound noted from the Chinese their dictum that art imitates nature in its methods of operation.

Similarly the language can make itself. "Impossible diagnose." Instead of impossible diagnosis or impossible to diagnose. Just enough words for the idea to attach itself frontally to the world.

You have to find a language that's comfortable with the trees.

Iijima's postures are adamant.

Telling this
is like being

tied to a tree
in the garden.

There's a kind of mastery in tying the language to the pitch. As in "Telling this / is like being /" and only then a more specific remonstrance from the moment (of writing).

Mallarmé wrote that everything exists to end in a book and yet he sculpted his lines to exclude most of it. His mind ran on very thin rails.

There are no comparisons possible in the world. Everything articulates itself. In doing so it finds its own place and weight and duration and balance. All things are of like mind.

When does meaning take over our reading experience from sound? When it forces us to slow down.

The two are in a balance like maybe particle and wave. But still we separate them out to make meaning of how things work.

The poem addresses these issues when it varies its own speed.

Sometimes words that come slowest to our

attention command it most. Some words unwind slowly towards a then familiar end.

The wonder
of a whirlpool
dish
washing
machine

In the case of these poems meaning accrues by dint of repeated hint. These suggested thoughts start from the left side of the page and are sort of punted out. So that meaning is an accumulation of suggestions.

At the heart of this book is its heart.

Each solar cell system
Each cellular solar system

Of course it's not that simple. Not by any means. But the whole (sic) can be seen to spin into and to spin out of that. Those words. Not what they describe (in a way) but the words themselves.

These things themselves then (these systems) are described to be "Twinning alchemists" which (we see) they must be. And then from this the metaphor (no (the example)) of a "Balinese girl in a trance" erupts.

We could say that poetry is composed of strands of reality.

The universe isn't made the way we think it is. It's made of thought. And thought gets housed in language. (The beginning of the problem. And from time to time its solution as well.) Housed so to speak.

It takes a certain kind of fearlessness to talk about the condition of this earth at this moment. We've already totally fucked it up. Any change might now come too late. So to speak lovingly of the place at all...

Just the landscape
before realization
before resource
before it could
speak. Just the land
scape before it does
before we could
before the land
scape is lost
just the landscape
before it is kept
in keeping
before image before
imagine just the
landscape. Just the
landscape before
us strange and un-
bridled just the land
scape lone and
bright. Just the

land
scape lost.

Perhaps this is the place to say something about structure. Perhaps now is the time. Structure inheres. It is inherent in each thing. It is how we tell one thing from another (one of the main ways anyway). How we (convince ourselves that we) can see the spaces between them.

(Perhaps here is the time. Perhaps now is the space.)

So everything that gets written has structure in it somewhere. I say in it but someone else might equally find the structure an external armature or something of the sort.

In a serial work such as *Around Sea* the structure would appear to be primarily a linear movement from beginning to end. But there are a number of things (also structural) that interrupt that linearity and enforce types of verticality. One of the most obvious might be the division of the book into sections. Various tonalities bounce the horizontal. And then the whole relationship of form with content gets foregrounded as different meanings (with their distinct durations and so on) that impart their fluctuations to the otherwise basic forward movement of the text.

I won't say anything more about the structure of this particular book. (Except perhaps to say that it's grounded in what surrounds us—what we would do well to see.) I don't think it's the job of a book critic to offer a reading of a book. The job is to offer a way or ways in which that reading can be done. The book article (never a re-view really) is always written from within the book.

Meanings do accrue. Whether they're voided at more or less the same rate at which they're taken in is something I don't know. It's probably more correct to say that it's what surrounds us—that we're in it. So meaning's that *Around Sea* too.

Penned realms

Alan Davies is the author of Name, Signage, Candor, Rave, and Life, forthcoming from O Books.

MERRY FORTUNE
GHOSTS BY ALBERT AYLER GHOSTS BY
ALBERT AYLER

Futurepoem Books, 2004, \$14

Ghosts by Albert Ayler Ghosts by Albert Ayler takes its title from free jazz, the Holy Trinity of which consists of John Coltrane (the Father), Pharaoh Sanders (the Son), and Albert Ayler (the Holy Ghost). The track referenced starts out toying with the memory of songs, their ghostly remnants. Soon, however, it blasts into a stratosphere of inner utterance. The note-by-note choices seem to be dictated, like

Fortune's poems, by their own "peculiar and keen sense of politics."

Could say it reminds me of a song but
I'm boycotting and dead against segues
of any kind

Just want to let it be known that I have a
peculiar and keen sense of politics. . .

As the title suggests, the book is pre-occupied with repetition, and so constitutes a course on rhyme. Generative rhyme is not afraid to grind its gears a little as it lets out the clutch. You don't have to look farther than the opening stanza of the first poem to find an example.

We'll meet in the morning by some old
water
The riverboats are painted colors as in
audible pink
sucky lemon blue red a malignant grey
echo in the moving water

We'll throw big stiff feed bread at gulls

The second line ends on "in audible pink," a nice phrase, especially led by the preposition that puts into play audible's opposite. But the poem doesn't close, and the image is undercut by "sucky lemon," and that by the bald "blue red," followed by the release of "a malignant grey echo in the moving water," which, in another kind of poetry, might have been the only version the reader encounters. While the "We'll" of the fourth line seems to echo the opening, "big stiff feed bread" has an attitude and stirs up the undisturbed "old water" of the first line. We're barely into the book and the poems are already coming apart. The set-up rhyme is not keeping still long enough for the completer rhyme to push it forward; rather, the completer rhyme, in order to have the freedom to say whatever it has to say, brushes aside the set-up rhyme. The poem is not one choice, but a plurality of choices, a radial array emanating from a single source.

This generosity of a poetics that can generate almost at will really comes through in "Music and Ghosts" and "Sleeping and Not Sleeping." Here patterns of syllable and sounds constantly evolve, pausing to riff and focus before taking up the generative thread again. One particularly telling move comes between the second and third stanzas in "Tenderly, O Tenderly For Rust."

For wanton Egyptian figurines and
wolverines where
Madness is furtive we weep on tiny pillows
Forwarded to scent of tenderly and amber
Rusted and squealing

Rusted and squealing we squelch
Tenderly and amber distrusted of the few...

It's characteristic of Fortune to take the last line and make it a first, to restart and push the recurrent element forward a little. The poet

may not know where the poem is going when it starts up again, but trusts that the poem does, and this is the pay-off. The poem knows more than the poet knows; it is a way out.

This lack of positioning gives the poem a vulnerability that has a price. Being on the outside (really on the outside, not "strategically on the margins") is no picnic. Think of Hannah Weiner. She may have been championed by those interested in positioning, but she did not write her poems as rearguard action against the culturally counter-revolutionary. She wrote the words she saw. That was her positionless position. Fortune's work shares this radical subjectivity and vulnerability. In poem after poem this outsider status is both rued and exalted.

"Your Perspective," a response to a friend who complains that he is losing "perspective," makes incandescently clear what's at stake for the outsider. It's not just a victim's role, something done to you; it's vision's prerequisite.

Personally I want no part of perspective
I want to see things for what they're not
and be loyal to the concept
And you say: Oh I'm losing perspective
and it's almost confessional
and you say it like a self-accusation

The reward for this groundlessness is flight; the alternative is to remain grounded in a visionless world that shrinks the more one tries to "get with the program" and "get it right."

Joe Elliot's book *Opposable Dumb* *is forthcoming from Subpress.*

ALLISON COBB
BORN TWO
Chax Press, 2004, \$16

Excavating and riffing on the geographical, cultural, and scientific history of the military-occupied American West (Cobb's father is Director of Threat Reduction for Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico), *Born Two* is a compelling document as dead playful as it is dead serious. Cobb's poems and images engage the particularly American forté for simultaneously wreaking impossible violence while almost instantly forgetting the victims. Each of the book's five long poems are intent on deep play with language, literary references and most of all, history and cultural inclinations usually locked away in America's little cabinet of what's not to be talked about: The atomic bomb, dismembered soldiers, war games, and the conquistador place-names of the colonized soil we stand on.

The first three poems, "The Little Box Book," "One-Foot Book," and "One-Foot: A History Play" are rife with images and ideas of war, dismemberment, and the strange erotica pur-suant to our nation's military "theatre of

operations." Cobb's poems are often tales of characters ("little box book" or "bb," "One-Foot," "Polar Bear," and "Desert Fox") as Occupiers occupied; "One-Foot" himself is a disembodied limb, ghostly cousin of conquistador Don Juan Oñate's dismembered Acoma victims, circa 1598. "The Little Box Book" follows Little BB as the s/he wrestles with an intentional process of cutting, withdrawal (of information, leaving the reading process open to our thoughts, our diversions and interpretations, the left-out, the "what said"), and composition as BB "scorched awake" inhabits the land of Cobb's birth and composes a malleable-gender self. In the "One-Foot" pieces, Cobb creates an artist's book at once spoofing elementary school primers and a 1950s Pollyanna version of (white) national pride that romps through the English language. It's a new kind of deadpan deadly, proving our poets as perhaps the nation's most apt pupils and investigative narrators yet. Spinning and joking in her sublime disjunctive narratives, sometimes half-said, left off, a thought, maybe a ... you fill in the blank on: "in the box a book/ and in that book/ another and in/ visible waves that/ make the fish split/ something's un- un-)"

Cobb also undertakes a kind of *Making of Americans*. Her play, "One-Foot: A History Play," overtly engages play as a textual procedure as she interrogates/excavates personal history (her grandfather served under "General Rose" in WWII, a war in which he also lost his leg) and literary history: "A Rose among dough is a Rose/ a spear rising go/ dough and boys rising." The allusions to Stein and, by proxy, Shakespeare, are obvious; Cobb's nods to poet-playwrights Carla Harryman and Kevin Killian are not quite as evident, but there, very. The final poem, "Polar Bear and Desert Fox," recalls themes auditioned in the earlier pieces (Little BB's iffy gender, One-Foot's swift reveals of gender bias, the pure giddy desire of "The J Poems") by ultimately conflating gender itself as a useful construction. Merging ideas of sexuality into un-gender-tainted skeins of mammalian love, Cobb cleverly elides Hélène Cixous's *écriture féminine* and Elizabeth Grosz's investigation(s) into what might actually make for a cogent definition of "feminine" (feminist) writing, anyway.

There's no place like home, no there there, no here here, either: the past is all and everything. *Born Two* is an open letter to play and chance the dark humor the child-mind affords us: unbridled mystery of imagination delighted by and delightfully aware of all that the grown-ups keep (violently) *shush*-ing.

Jane Sprague publishes Palm Press, www.palm-press.org

NICOLE BROSSARD
INTIMATE JOURNAL OR HERE'S A MANUSCRIPT
Translated by Barbara Godard
The Mercury Press, 2004, \$14.95

"The journal is the very bottom drawer of existence," Brossard writes, and *Intimate Journal* is one of those drawers one opens with anticipation as well as a certain ruefulness. Written more than 20 years ago, but only now available in English, this is a book that embodies many of the thorny issues that beset feminist writing at a moment when post-structuralist theory, as well as charges of elitism, blasted away at the premises of its project of re-defining woman with a capital W.

But having opened the drawer, it is undoubtedly pleasurable to re-encounter the erotically charged, full-speed-ahead "let's invent a new language for a new subjectivity" expansiveness of Brossard's urban, lesbian, Québécois, radical, positively Whitmanesque muse:

Poetry ... It's my genre completely. In poetry I contemplate myself exuberantly. It's my unique strength. Force of gravity, electric, and magnetic energy ... To make consciousness as, it is said, to make love.

Much of the "journal," however, is written in a fairly straightforward, even journalistic prose, evidence of its origins as a piece commissioned for radio. Brossard has written compellingly about her resistance to established categories of writing, and her most beguiling work seems to take place in a "boundary between." Here, she exercises her subversive tendencies by adding to each of the journal's five segments a "poetic" coda—as if the more ordinary language needed to be poured through a two-step filtration system: the first allowing only selected words and phrases to settle into a paragraph-like cistern, and the second further purifying and arranging them into a short concluding lyric.

But the best parts of *Intimate Journal* are neither the more narrative nor the more explicitly "poetic" ones. Instead, the real poetry lies in what Lyn Hejinian calls "the language of inquiry"—in this case, a dispersed collection of syntactically malleable, investigatory sentences through which Brossard attempts to will into existence a new *imaginaire*, often through reflection on the writing process. We have the sensation of walking one step behind the writer on her chosen tight-rope, bobbing perilously, while she rather deliriously puts one foot in front of the next:

Slowing down between each word I learned to identify a certain number of the technics of thought. I also learned to see the gaps coming, to hear them without

ever being able to make myself quite their echo. The blanks ... are in fact so full of thoughts, words, sensations, hesitations, and audacities that it can all be translated only by a tautology; that is to say, by another blank, a visual one.

I have always imagined myself as an equation in motion in the night of time, undulating equation that approaches, that distances me, consigning me to vertigo and equilibrium ...

This approach to writing as a kind of "cognitive-improv" is perhaps at the root of Brossard's insistence on being a writer "of the present." Unlike others engaged in such experiments, who go away into their laboratories and re-emerge with strange new results for our inspection, Brossard prefers to work out in the courtyard, talking aloud to us as she manipulates her variables. Thus her work can be messier and less "finished" than that of others, but the unconcealed struggle can be heartening to some of us toiling in the more obscure corners of the research facility.

In the years since *Intimate Journal* was written, the very notion of subjectivity has become more and more richly problematic. Looking back, however, it can sometimes seem that the project of inventing a new feminine subjectivity (what Brossard called *l'écriture au féminin*) "dis-integrated" too quickly, without having accomplished all that was possible, even as it was transformed, necessarily, in the wake of anti-essentialist critiques.

Now in the wake of the wake, many are returning to some of this earlier feminist work to see what was perhaps undervalued in the sweeping enthusiasm of reform. In doing so one could do worse than to be inspired by what Brossard in *The Aerial Letter* called "the necessary willingness to start over," and by her determination to "enunciate everything, articulate an inexpressible attitude ... to remake reality endlessly."

Evelyn Reilly's first book of poetry, Hiatus, was published in 2004 by Barrow Street Press.

ELIZABETH FRIEDMANN
A MANNERED GRACE: THE LIFE OF LAURA
(RIDING) JACKSON
Persea, 2005, \$37.50

In this authorized biography, Elizabeth Friedmann presents an engaging, well-written, meticulously researched, sympathetic but not fawning portrait of Laura (Riding) Jackson (1901-1991). The well-known anecdotes are here, but Friedmann does an excellent job of desensationalizing the poet's life and setting the record straight without suppressing the negative distortions, and even smear campaigns, of many previous commentators, biographers, and literary critics.

HAMBONE

17

Poetry and prose by
David Marriot, Evie
Shockley, George
Kalamaras, Lyn Hejinian,
Geoffrey Jacques, Clayton
Eshleman, Paul Naylor,
C.S. Giscombe, Noah Eli
Gordon, John Keene, Ed
Roberson, William Corbett,
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Weinstein, Jeffery Renard
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M. NourbeSe Philip, Hank
Lazer, Chris Tysh, Kathy
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Neither does Friedmann suppress the fact that she knew (Riding) Jackson personally during the last decade of her life. Her account of their meeting frames the book in such a way that the author becomes a character against whom other characters in the book (such as Robert Graves's biographer Martin Seymour Smith) can be measured. Reading Friedmann's account of her burgeoning intimacy (epistolary at first) with (Riding) Jackson, one may see the friendship that ultimately developed between Riding and her future biographer as an embodied counter-example to those who broke off their correspondence with Riding (many examples of which are included in this book) often because of their fear of her insistence on honest communication. By framing her biography with these personal accounts, Friedmann is able to avoid one of the generic pitfalls of biographies.

In a piece published when she was 83 years old, (Riding) Jackson writes: "There is always the problem, in judging a biography *AS TRUTH*, of evaluating, under the extent of its knowledge-basis, the degree of purity of the biographer's feeling towards his subject..." She goes on to state that "biographical telling can go wrong in its trying to mingle truth about the subject of the telling with what the biographical narrator is moved to inject into it as truth about himself..." ("Engaging In The Impossible," *Sulfur*, 1984.)

While this statement could lead one to think that (Riding) Jackson is arguing against the possibility that any true biography of her could be written, Friedmann eschews the agendas of other biographers (such as Deborah Baker's *In Extremis*, or Seymour Smith) by consciously acknowledging these limitations, and moving on from there—to show (Riding) Jackson in light of the standards she set for herself and others. The result is clearly the best biography of (Riding) Jackson to date. Its truth is precisely its recognition of the limits of biographical truth.

Friedmann places the biographical accounts in perspective by juxtaposing the "page-turner" passages with critical summaries, and some analyses, of some of Riding's most important work, which will certainly help contribute to a continuing discussion of (Riding) Jackson and her work, and, at least as importantly, the concerns raised by that work. This helps her give the lie to both the "demonic" Riding as well as the tragic victim Riding—images which unfortunately infect the literary criticism of such prominent formalist critics as Helen Vendler and Marjorie Perloff, and thus have contributed to a literary climate in which a Pound or Stein is valorized and yet Riding is still called a "white goddess," a "witch of truth," or, just as bad, "obscure" and "intellectual."

Friedmann's rendering certainly offers a use-

ful counter to these too-common distortions of Riding's work and life, yet (as Friedmann would be the first to admit) it is no substitute for *The Telling*, *The Word "Woman,"* *Progress of Stories*, *Four Unposted Letters To Catherine*, *Anarchism is Not Enough*, and, the poems (to name some of the work currently in print)—along with the simultaneously released *Laura (Riding) Jackson Reader*, edited by Friedmann. But even if *A Mannered Grace*, like any supplementary material, may be used to protect the reader from "the imaginative terrors" in the work itself, it's not a bad place to start.

Chris Stroffolino's third book, *Speculative Primitive*, is just out from *Tougher Disguises Press*.

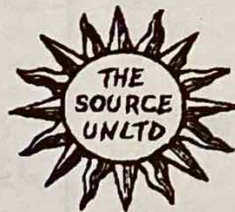
JUST THE THING: SELECTED LETTERS OF JAMES SCHUYLER 1951-1991
EDITED BY WILLIAM CORBETT
Turtle Point Press, 2004, \$21.95

James Schuyler has been by some accounts the "overlooked" New York School poet, the shy guy who didn't go to Harvard. He has the distinction now of being the first of that legendary company to have his letters published. This, plus the reissues of the novels *Alfred and Guinevere* and *What's for Dinner?*, the recent availability of his diary and his art criticism, are indications of his durability, which owes nothing to academic criticism and everything to his fans: people *fall in love* with Schuyler. Novelist James McCourt, in his memoir *Queer Street*, recounts the fervid meet-

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ing of two Schuyler fans, he and Wayne Koestenbaum: "He is the best ... Every time I read 'Hymn to Life,' I burst out crying." St. Mark's Parish Hall overflowed on the Monday night last November when the editor of *Just the Thing*, William Corbett, emceed a group reading of it. When John Ashbery, one of the most frequent recipients of Schuyler's missives, was interrupted by a cell phone and quipped "It's Mister Softee!" who in the audience did not feel, at that moment, that a character from a beloved novel had stepped from its pages?

And that's just it: *Just the Thing* is as absorbing as a novel, turning the letters' recipients into characters that are by turns addressees and subject matter (of gossip, of course). There's more "snappy dialog" recounted or invented here than in most novels, and a heightened intensity to it all that made me feel like I was living a reverse *Pleasantville*. Reader picks up book set in 1950s and watches her black-and-white world slowly turn Technicolor. "Dear Clayhanger ... Dear Americans ... Dear Prisoner in a Chinese Laundry" begin a series of letters to Ashbery. "love, Josette Day ... Ever-thine, Hilton Kramer ... Love, Tilly" It is as if changing costume or tone could multiply the characters, and it does. But tone isn't just a sign of play—it's a key to relationships. The straight guys like Koch got mostly "Dear Kenneth ... Love, Jimmy."

The characters change: in the beginning there are a lot of letters to Ashbery, to Fairfield Porter, to John Button, but then they fade and Ron Padgett, Joe Brainard, Anne Dunn take over. The letters begin in a mental hospital in White Plains, switch to Manhattan, settle in Southampton (where Schuyler lived with Fairfield Porter and family for 16 years) and end in the Chelsea Hotel. The passage of time is a kind of plot; the anecdotes and information shared become a series of episodes. The need to abide with this voice, this character and his friends, keeps the pages turning. One learns that Schuyler was a prodigious reader of novels. I suspect though that he had an innate gift for whatever it is that keeps a reader pinned to her seat by grace of style alone.

And where does style intersect with personality? Who was this "Schuyler," this poetic persona that fans adore? He wasn't always so adored by those who knew him. Justin Spring's biography of Fairfield Porter captures a difficult but charming parasite on the affluent Porters, so mentally fragile that he could not be counted on to hold a job and apartment of his own, but canny enough to string a lovelorn bisexual Porter along and hint to his wife that he was saving her marriage. He was hospitalized more than once for

psychotic episodes, once threatening to kill a friend's child. He became a rapturous convert to Episcopalianism. He was a heavily drugged and slovenly Chelsea Hotel habitue at the end. It's hard to connect this fascinating character to the voice in the letters, though one does wonder a little at the numb reticence toward Frank O'Hara's death.

Just the Thing shows how Schuyler—who enjoys a reputation of being a direct, natural, realist—was a master inventor and artificer of words. The letters are a world, and his correspondents, those famous poets and painters, are larger than life through his eyes. Schuyler was as complicated and contradictory as any great artist: however, he acquired his posthumous cachet as the outsider, the bohemian whose plaque resides by Dylan Thomas's at the Chelsea. He often lived a life of vicariousness, living in other people's households, traveling through other people's auspices, reading and generally being idle. And to switch it around: he wasn't just the homebody who liked kids and dogs and cookery and gardening, he was the poet of whom it was said, again by James McCourt, "not since Hopkins the most vital measure of English poetry, not since Whitman the strongest representation in verse of American speech."

Ange Mlinko edited the Poetry Project Newsletter from 2000-2002.

MARJORIE PERLOFF
THE VIENNA PARADOX
New Directions, 2004, \$15.95

I find most memoirs vaguely irritating. Too many of them are full of the treacly sweetness of attenuated autobiographies. In contrast, *The Vienna Paradox* is full of ideas and argument. It does tell Perloff's story of escaping from Vienna to come to America, but she also gives us a history of three generations of Vienna's assimilated Jews—Jews who for the most part worshipped European and, in particular, German high culture and for whom the writings of Goethe served as a bible.

We see up close the Vienna of Freud, Wittgenstein, and Otto Wagner, who crowd the book's opening pages. Perloff describes "the extraordinary success of the Austrian Jews that followed Emancipation—a success always shadowed by the widespread anti-Semitism of the Empire that was to come to an abrupt halt with the German Anschluss of Austria in March 1938." She discusses the exiling of Ernst Gombrich, Arthur Schoenberg, and Theodor Adorno, as well as members of her own family. We meet Perloff's grandfather Richard Schuller, who was the Austrian foreign secretary under Chancellor Dollfuss and a special delegate to the League of Nations, despite the fact he had

rejected the social baptism required at the time for Jews who wanted "to get on."

Accompanied by literary insights from poets such as Charles Bernstein, Lyn Hejinian, and Frank O'Hara, Perloff takes us with her on her road to becoming an American scholar and author of over a dozen books of literary criticism and cultural studies. At the book's very beginning, she discusses the newly awakened interest in Viennese culture in America, and takes us to New York's Neue Galerie and its Café Sabarsky, whose menu reinvents Viennese classics that in Proustian fashion recall for Perloff the meals of her childhood.

Personal memory, family history, class snobbery, and an ongoing celebration of the values of high cultures—in particular avant-garde poetry and music—fill these pages, all of which in turn become a background and foreground of Perloff's life. After Hitler's annexation of Austria, Perloff and her family escape from Austria to settle in New York. She traces how her family, her grandfather, father, mother, and assorted scholarly relatives keep up the intellectual tradition of their lost Vienna in America. In a first step toward Americanization, Perloff, when she was enrolled on a scholarship to the Fieldston School in the Bronx, changed her name from Gabrielle to Marjorie. The chapter titled "Kulture, Kitsch and Ethical Cultures" that relates the years of her growing up is the closest one in the book to conventional memoir. Even here, the story of her high school and college years are interspersed with the stories of the lives of other German Jewish exiles such as Adorno (born Theodor Weisengrund), who offered relentless critiques of American low culture and returned to Germany right after the war.

Perloff does not excuse the racial and intellectual snobbery that was part of her upbringing. For example, her marriage to Morris Perloff, a man of Russian/Jewish parentage, was to her Viennese family a step down socially, overlooked because they decided he "looked Italian" and was a medical student. A witty moment occurs when she gets a job as a title writer for MGM, which proves to be a full-scale initiation into American popular culture. "Why, I told Bernie, should one spend one's life reading and looking at kitsch? Surely," she protests, "there must be a loftier mission in life?" And it is our good luck she meant exactly that. True to family tradition, she goes back to school, earns her PhD in English literature, writes a series of scholarly books, becomes a distinguished professor at Stanford University, and in 1981 publishes *The Poetics of Indeterminacy: Rimbaud to Cage*.

Corinne Robins's most recent book is One Thousand Years, Marsh Hawk Press, 2004.

BOOKS RECEIVED

BOOKS AND CDS

AHADADA READER I

Alan Halsey, John Byrum, and
Geraldine Monk
Ahadada Books, 85 pgs.

I NEVER KNEW WHAT TIME IT WAS

David Antin
U. of California, \$16.95, 164 pgs.

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Steve Benson
Atelos, \$12.95, 136 pgs.

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Daniel Bouchard
Subpress, \$10, 92 pgs.

DAY MARK

Lee Briccetti
Four Way Books, \$14.95, 70 pgs.

BITING THE ERROR: WRITERS EXPLORE NARRATIVE

Edited by Mary Burger, Robert
Glück, Camille Roy, and Gail Scott
Coach House, \$17.95, 301 pgs.

THE YALE ANTHOLOGY OF TWEN- TIETH-CENTURY FRENCH POETRY

Mary Ann Caws
Yale, \$39.95, 576 pgs.

SELECTIONS

Paul Celan
U. of California, \$17.95, 242 pgs.

THE DIRTY BLUE CAR

Fielding Dawson
Xoxoxo Press, \$10, 171 pgs.

MY DEVOTION

Clayton Eshleman
Black Sparrow, \$16.95, 126 pgs.

AVENUE NOIR

Vernon Frazer
xPress(ed), 44 pgs.

THE FEMINIST AVANT-GARDE IN AMERICAN POETRY

Elisabeth A. Frost
U. of Iowa, 245 pgs.

CARLO GOLDONI'S ARCIFANFARO, KING OF FOOLS: OR IT'S ALWAYS TOO LATE TO LEARN

Translated and adapted by W.H.
Auden
Unmuzzled Ox, \$12, 117 pgs.

WATERSHED: AIKIDO TANKA

Renée Gregorio
Tres Chiccas Books, \$12, 70 pgs.

THE EXTERNAL COMBUSTION ENGINE

Michael Ives
Futurepoem, \$14, 128 pgs.

TO BE SUNG

Michael Kelleher
BlazeVOX Books, 60 pgs.

LAPIS

Robert Kelly
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Burt Kimmelman
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Alice James, \$13.95, 80 pgs.

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Márton Koppány
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Ann Lauterbach
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Ann Lauterbach
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MY LIFE IN CIA: A CHRONICLE OF 1973

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WHETHERING

Rusty Morrison
Center for Literary Publishing,
\$14.95, 53 pgs.

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Jennifer Moxley

Flood Editions, \$12.95, 61 pgs.

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John Olson
First Intensity Press, \$12, 66 pgs.

CUR ALIQUID VIDI

Lance Phillips
Ahsakta Press, \$14.95, 62 pgs.

A NEW GEOGRAPHY OF TIME

Robert Viscusi
Guernica, \$10, 56 pgs.

SUSPENSION OF A SECRET IN ABANDONED ROOMS

Joshua Marie Wilkinson
Pinball Publishing, \$12, 88 pgs.

PART OF THE DESIGN

Laura Wright
Meeting Eyes Bindery, \$10, 63 pgs.

MAGAZINES

ANTENNAE SIX

Jesse Seldess, ed., 2325 W. Ainslie
#1, Chicago, IL, 60625. Work by
Clark Coolidge, Lewis Warsh, Stacy
Doris, and others. \$6 per issue/\$12
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CHICAGO REVIEW: ZUKOFSKY

Eirik Steinhoff, ed., 5801 South
Kenwood Ave., Chicago, IL 60637.
Work on and by Zukofsky, including
Mark Scroggins, Elsa Dorfman, and
Paul Zukofsky. \$18 per issue.

KALLIOPE: A JOURNAL OF WOMEN'S LITERATURE & ART

Mary Sue Koeppel, ed., 11901
Beach Blvd., Jacksonville, FL
32246. \$9.

POM2 ISSUE FIVE

720 5th Ave., #2L, Brooklyn, NY
11215. Work by Charles Bernstein,
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Kristin Prevallet, Anne Waldman,
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3157. Work by Alice Notley,
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others. \$15.

VERSE: THE SECOND DECADE
Dept. of English, U. of Georgia,
Athens, GA 30602. Work by Rae
Armantrout, John Ashbery, Lee Ann
Brown, Clark Coolidge, and 246
other poets. \$20.

TINY PRESSES

NEXT DOOR TO SAMSARA

Keith Abbott
Fell Snoop, The All Bohemian Revue,
3003 Ponce de Leon St., New
Orleans, LA 70119. Chapbook.

THE SECRET ADVENTURES OF BERNADETTE

Dave Brinks
Trembling Pillow Press postcard
series #1. 907 Saint Peter St.,
NOLA, 70116.

FROM 21 HAIKU

Megan Burns
Trembling Pillow Press postcard
series #2. 907 Saint Peter St.,
NOLA, 70116.

THE ALGEBRA OF DOING IT

Christopher Butters
Partisan Press, P.O. Box 11417,
Norfolk, VA 23517. Chapbook.

PRIMARY WRITING 10/04

Norma Cole
Phyllis Rosenzweig/Diane Ward, eds.,
2009 Belmont Rd., NW, Apt. 203,
Washington DC 20009

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Belladonna* 69. 458 Lincoln Place,
Suite 4B, Brooklyn, NY 11238.
Chapbook.

FELL SWOOP: THE OH NO ISSUE

Edited by X.J. Dailey. Work by
Richard Martin, John Bennett, and
others. \$10 for three issues.

NEAR MINGLEWOOD

William Fuller
Bronze Skull Press, 2542 N.
Bremen, #2, Milwaukee, WI
53211. Chapbook.

GAM: A BIENNIAL SURVEY OF
GREAT LAKES WRITING
Stacy Szymaszek, ed., home.earth-
link.net/~traverse-lit/gam. Work by

Karl Gartung, Karl Young, and
Morgan Gibson. Cover art by Etel
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BUS

Roberto Harrison
Bronze Skull Press, 2542 N.
Bremen, #2, Milwaukee, WI
53211. Chapbook.

118 WESTERLY TERRACE

Susan Howe
Belladonna* 68. 458 Lincoln Place,
Suite 4B, Brooklyn, NY 11238.
Chapbook.

YOUR PILL

Amy L. Ouzoonian
Foothills Publishing, www.foothills
publishing.com. Handsewn book.

ASH

David Pavelich
Bronze Skull Press, 2542 N.
Bremen, #2, Milwaukee, WI
53211. Chapbook.

BREATHE

India Radfar
Shiv Mirabito, 54E Tinker St.,
Woodstock, NY 12498. Limited edi-
tion of 333 copies. Handmade
Nepalese paper with illustrations by
Saskia Friedrich.

O NEW YORK

Trey Sager
Ugly Duckling Presse, www.uglyduck-
lingpresse.org. Chapbook. Edition of
250.

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Marianne Shaneen
Portable Press at Yo-Yo Labs, 596
Bergen St., Brooklyn, NY 11238. \$6
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Kerri Sonnenberg

Bronze Skull Press, 2542 N.
Bremen, #2, Milwaukee, WI
53211. Chapbook.

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Suite 4B, Brooklyn, NY 11238.
Chapbook.

AIRPORT MUSIC

Mark Tardi
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53211. Chapbook.

NOVELTY ACT

Maureen Thorson
Ugly Duckling Presse, www.uglyduck-
lingpresse.org. Chapbook. Edition of
250.

STUYVESANT BEE

Mike Topp
8 Stuyvesant Oval, #8, NY NY
10009. Tiny magazine, "World
poetry projections: 2010 12,385,
825,000 poems."

HOT POETRY

King Wenclas
Underground Literary Alliance, P.O.
Box 42077, Philadelphia, PA
19101. \$3. Brightly colored chap-
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WHAT I SHOULD HAVE SAID OR THE BIBLE

Laura E. Wright
Potato Clock Editions, 3035 O'Neal
Parkway #V-14, Boulder, CO
80301. Chapbook.

YAWP NUMERO UNO

Dave Brinks, ed., Trembling Pillow
Press, 907 Saint Peter St., NOLA,
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