

poetry project

NEWSLETTER

FEB/MARCH 1998 ISSUE #168

\$5.00

WHAT'S INSIDE

An Interview
with Bernadette Mayer
by Lisa Jarnot

Symposium 97: On Gender
by Brenda Coultas

Moscow in June
by Leonard Schwartz

REVIEWS OF

Frank Lima

Charles Reznikoff

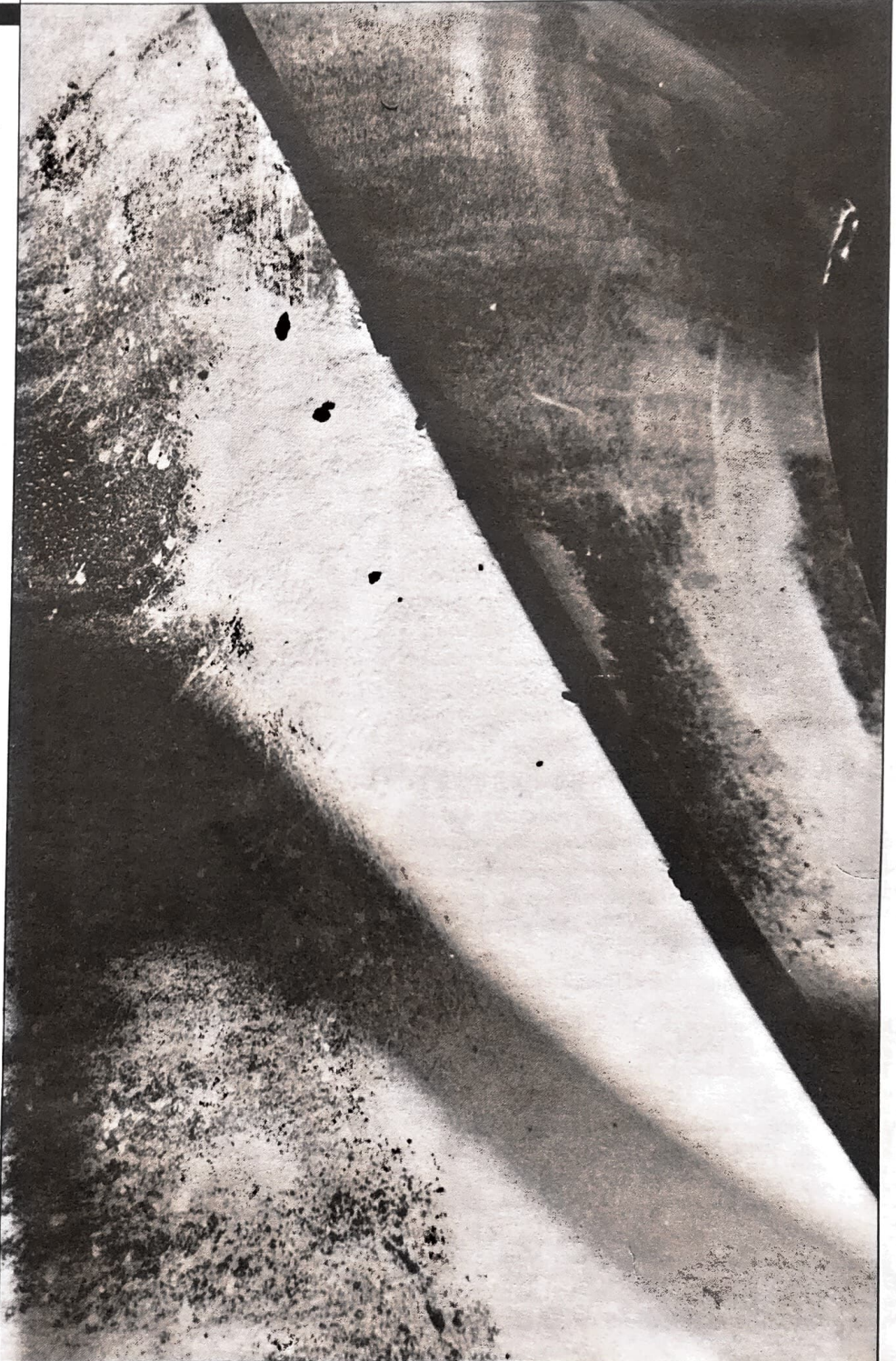
Mary Burger

Stephen Malmude

Heather Fuller

Edwin Torres

Kristin Prevallet



contents

REGIONAL UPDATES	3
ANNOUNCEMENTS	4
FEATURES	
An Interview with Bernadette Mayer by Lisa Jarnot	6
Symposium 97: On Gender by Brenda Coultas	10
Moscow in June by Leonard Schwartz	11
CALENDAR	14
BOOKS REVIEWED	16
BOOKS RECEIVED	26

Newsletter Editor: Lisa Jarnot
Original Design: Dirk Rowntree
Cover Photograph: Bridget Brehen
Distribution:
Bernhard DeBoer Inc., 113 East Center Street,
Nutley, NJ 07110
Desert Moon Periodicals, 1226 Calle de
Comercio, Santa Fe, NM 87505
The Poetry Project Ltd. Staff:
Artistic Director: Ed Friedman • Program
Coordinator: Marcella Durand • Program
Assistant: Bridget Brehen • Monday Night
Coordinator: Tracie Morris • Wednesday Night
Coordinators: Lisa Jarnot and Eleni Sikelianos •
Friday Night Coordinator: Christian X. Hunter •
Workshop Leaders: Charlotte Carter, Bernadette
Mayer, and Tony Towle • Monday Night Assistant:
Keith Roach • Friday Night Assistant: David Vogen
• Broadcast Consultant: John Fisk • Interns: Marc
Tannenbaum • Volunteers: Douglas Rothschild,
Serena Siegfried, Merry Fortune, Linda
Neiberg, David Cameron, and Cheryl Teran.

Board of Directors: Dianne Benson, Michel de

Konkoly Thege, Ted Greenwald, Steve
Hamilton, Ken Jordan, Greg Masters, Gillian
McCain, Elinor Nauen, Paul Slovak, Vicki
Hudspith Turbeville, Wang Ping, Edwin Torres,
and Hal Willner.

Friends Committee: Brooke Alexander, Rudy
Burckhardt, Susan Davis, Steve Dennin, Renée
Fotouhi, Raymond Foye, Michael Friedman,
Morris Golde, Yvonne Jaquette, Peter Pennoyer,
Jessica Reighard, Paul Schmidt, Kimberly
Vernardos, and Alexander Wood.

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

The Poetry Project's programs and publications

are also made possible with contributions from:
The Aeroflex Foundation; Brooke Alexander
Gallery/Brooke Alexander Editions; the
Foundation for Contemporary Performance
Arts, Inc.; Consolidated Edison; the Axi-
Houghton Foundation; The Lila Acheson
Wallace Theater Fund, established in Community
Funds by the co-founder of The Reader's Digest
Association; Battle Fowler, LLP; Rabobank
Nederland; Winthrop, Stimson, Putnam &
Roberts; Dianne Benson; Rosemary Carroll;
Georgia & Bill Delano; Ada & Alex Katz; Michel
de Konkoly Thege; Vicki Hudspith & Wallace
Turbeville; Elmore Leonard; Susan Levin; Larry
Lieberman; Simon Schuchat; Russell Banks;
Karrie & Trevor Wright; members of the Poetry
Project; and other individual contributors.

The Poetry Project Newsletter is published four times a
year and mailed free of charge to members and contrib-
utors to the Poetry Project. Subscriptions are available for
\$20/year. Checks should be made payable to The Poetry
Project, St. Mark's Church, 131 East 10th St., NYC, NY
10003. For more information call (212) 674-0910.

Copyright ©1997 Poetry Project. All rights revert to the authors upon
publication.

San Diego Cor
Boulder Corres
Honolulu Corres
London Corres

SAN DIEGO

Well it is no
San Diego i
of its lesse
Archive for
a look
orpheus.uc
you'll find
soon to ad
illustrious
Bernadette
currently be
talented St
that it inclu
lished poe
you didn't
an active F
the border
town both
reading an
the events
art festival
installation
from the
Tijuana an
Also, the U
us 6 auth
Fanny Ho
has a very p
series in th
plans for
coordinate
offer at
Californi
writers an
two. Buy
BOULDER
Snow, ye
shakeups
hundreds
rocky foot
town. Rec
Whalen b
nized The
Penny L
Akmatova
Klebnikov
Jack Co
Waldman

regional updates

San Diego Correspondent: Joe Ross
Boulder Correspondent: Anne Waldman
Honolulu Correspondent: Juliana Spahr
London Correspondent: Tim Atkins

SAN DIEGO, CA

Well it is no secret that the weather in San Diego is great, but what may be one of its lesser known resources is the Archive for New Poetry at UCSD. Take a look for yourself: <http://orpheus.ucsd.edu/speccoll>. I'm sure you'll find some old friends there and soon to add more shine to this already illustrious gathering will be the Bernadette Mayer collection, which is currently being organized by the multi-talented Stephen Cope. Rumor has it that it includes books' worth of unpublished poems and collaborations, but you didn't hear that here. It has been an active Fall. Roberto Tejada crossed the border to kick things off. He was in town both to grace us with a superb reading and to participate in some of the events surrounding the inSites '97 art festival. Dozens of site-specific installations could be encountered from the suburbs to downtown to Tijuana and the spaces in between. Also, the UCSD Fall reading series gave us 6 authors in 6 weeks, including Fanny Howe and David Bromige and has a very promising Winter and Spring series in the making. In the works are plans for another reading series to coordinate with a new series in LA to offer at least a two-site Southern Californian destination for visiting writers and possibly a publication or two. Buy your tickets now.

BOULDER, CO

Snow, year-long unsolved murder, shakeups in the police dept., the big hundreds of wattage star lit up on the rocky foothills of this over mile-high town. Recent informative talk on Philip Whalen by Randy Roark who also organized The Russian Revolution event at Penny Lane (readings of work of Akmatova, Tsvetaeva, Mayakovsky, Klebnikov by likes of Anselm Hollo, Jack Collom, Steven Taylor, Anne Waldman, others that went out on pub-

lic access radio KGNU.) Ongoing zippy readings & performances at radical Left Hand Book Collective (Gertrude Stein night with new collaborative play *5 Lovers in 5 Acts*). 3 by 3 series started up by Cole Swensen (welcome activity-demon in the 'hood) featuring University of Co., University of Denver & Naropa students, plus co-hosting of events featuring Tom Raworth, Kathleen Fraser. Ed Dorn giving inspired stellar readings of new work, cranky & crackling as ever. Impeccable & with exemplary dignity how he works with his illness. Publications abound, among them: *Jumbo Shrimp*, anthology of prose work by Naropa students & faculty. Annual Camp Kerouac Summer Program lining up mid-June/mid-July 1998 with Carl Rakosi, Barbara Guest, Ferlinghetti, Alice Notley, Harryette Mullen, David Henderson, Ed Sanders, Joanne Kyger, Mei Mei Berssenbrugge, Arthur Sze, Rikki Ducornet, Victor Cruz, Elizabeth Willis, many many others will be teaching, reading, lecturing. Write for catalogue ready February/March. Some scholarships available for students of color. Contact: Julie Kizershot, Coordinator, The Summer Writing Program, Naropa Institute, 2130 Arapahoe Ave, Boulder 80302.

HONOLULU, HI

In October there was a reading to celebrate the new issue of *Tinfish*. The reading was packed and lots of young people were there. Among those reading were Joe Balaz (he read a long rambling Balaz poem in pidgin that was pure narration with little point; it should be a genre), Kathy Dee Kaleokealoha Kaloloahilani Banggo (her poems are in a thicker pidgin; *Tinfish* just did a chapbook of hers that is excellent), Tony Quagliano, and Marie Hara. Then at the end of October Albert Saijo read. When he said, "I AM AN ANIMAL IN A CAGE AND I'M BARKING TO BE LET OUT," a woman in the audience said "you go girl." Saijo hung out with the Beats and he lives in Volcano now. His book shows he is clearly a new

Blake-kooky, visual, emphasis on the rhapsodic. In November Kilali Alailima, Taueva Faotusia, Mary Tuti Baker, Ruth Tuiteleleapaga, Luafata Simanu-Klutz, and Dr. Papalii Failautusi Avegalio read at a reading for Samoan, Tongan, and Hawaiian writers. It was held leeward side at Pokai Bay. It was paradise to sit on the grass and hear things read out loud and the ocean at the same time and then eat some breadfruit afterwards. The reading was hours long but no one complained. December started with Normie Salvador and Cabaret Tiki reading together. Salvador read a lot of heavily rhythmic poems that were part sci-fi, part deep image. I had expected boas with a name like Cabaret Tiki, but instead it was a large group of younger men and women in those ever popular muted aloha shirts doing comedy sketches. They did a sketch called "Haole Go Home" and then another called "How to Raise a Successfully Asian Child" that had the audience laughing hard but a visiting poet from New York found them racist. Then ending December Alison Deming (visiting from Tucson) read poems about butterflies, flora and fauna, indigenous tourism, and things like "the sweet togetherness of women." She likes the word science and says it with emphasis when it appears in her poems.

LONDON, ENGLAND

It's a generally exciting London, currently, with readings by Gregg Wheelan & Larry Lynch at the One in the Other gallery, a repeat performance of Bob Perelman's *Marginalization* thing at The Serpentine & the return of Fiona Templeton before Christmas. The new year brings readings by Stacy Doris, Lisa Robertson, and Khaled Hakim, all in London. Tom Raworth, John Kinsella, and Tony Lopez are 3 of the many readers at Dartington College, in Totnes in Devon, on Jan 15th, for 'Spelt!': an event organised by Caroline Bergvall. In November, Henri Deluy's 4th International Biennale de Poets in Ivry-sur-Seine took place featuring Miles Champion, Stephen Rodefer, and Douglas Messerli amongst many others.

announcements

James Laughlin 1914-1997

James Laughlin, poet and founder of New Directions, died on November 12th. Laughlin was a longtime friend to experimental writers, beginning his career as a publisher in 1936 with an anthology of writing that included the work of Gertrude Stein, Ezra Pound, William Carlos Williams, and others. Throughout the years New Directions has continued to provide the public with the work of both young and established experimental poets. Laughlin was also a poet in his own right. His **New and Selected Poems** is scheduled to be published next year by New Directions.

Anamnesis Poetry Chapbook Competition

Anamnesis Press is sponsoring an annual poetry chapbook competition. Poets are encouraged to submit 20-30 pages of their best poems for consideration. The winner will receive \$750 and 20 copies of the winning chapbook. The deadline for submissions in March 15, 1998. For full contest instructions, send a SASE to Anamnesis Press, Poetry Chapbook Award Competition, PO Box 51115, Palo Alto, CA 94303.

National Prize in Poetry & Fiction

The Loft, one of the nation's largest literary centers, is offering a National Prize in Poetry and Fiction for 1998. Two winners, one in each category, will receive a \$1000 cash prize and publication. The winning entries will also be published in national journals to be announced later. The deadline

for submissions is March 2, 1998. For more information send a SASE to National Prize in Poetry & Fiction, The Loft, 66 Malcolm Avenue SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414.

Foundation for Contemporary Performance Arts Announces Grants

In December, the Foundation for Contemporary Performance Arts announced its 1997 grants. In total, ten artists received grants this year for outstanding work in their respective fields. An artist-supported organization, the Foundation was established in 1963 by John Cage and Jasper Johns. Among this year's recipients were two poets, Alice Notley and Edward Sanders.

Happy New Year

Thanks to all the volunteers and donors who made the 1998 New Years Benefit a great success. This year's donors included Black Forest Pastry Shop, Scot Paris Fine Desserts, Inc., Jon Vie Pastries, Vesuvio Bakery, Miracle Grill, Veselka, Taylor's, Rectangle's, Prana, and the Telephone Bar. The Poetry Project also thanks Brendan Lorber for donating copies of **Lungfull!** magazine; Edwin Torres for donating his chapbook, **SandHommeNomadNo**; and Situations Press/Granary Books for donating **Great Stories of the Chair** by Ted Berrigan. These publications are available for sale at the Project.

Karl Kim Connell 1953-1997

The Poetry Project wishes to extend condolences to the family of Karl

Kim Connell, a member of the Poetry Project who died on December 11th in New York.

Position Available: Poetry Project Newsletter Editor

The Poetry Project is now accepting proposals and resumes for the position of newsletter editor beginning in the summer of 1998. Qualifications include a knowledge of Quark Express, some experience with layout and design, and strong copy editing and proof reading skills. Send queries to Ed Friedman, The Poetry Project, St. Mark's Church in the Bowery, New York, NY 10003.

Brannan Scholarship

In memory of Lisa Brannan, a writing major at Hunter College and Poetry Project editorial intern, her parents, James and Cheryl Brannan have donated two scholarships for young women interested in creative writing to take a workshop this spring at the Poetry Project. For further information about these scholarships, please call the Poetry Project office at 674-0910.

Denise Levertov 1923-1997

American poet Denise Levertov died on December 20th in Seattle, Washington. Levertov, the author of numerous books, was a driving force in contemporary American poetry, and played a major role in the aesthetics and community of the Black Mountain School. She was also a political activist throughout her life, as well as a teacher and editor. The next issue of the newsletter will include more on Denise Levertov and her work.

Kathy Acker 1948-1997

One of the smartest American women-writers has left us: she has moved into another dimension probably only to chat up Allen Ginsberg and William Burroughs with her wit there, in Bardo. They shared here, among us, the most privileged Olympus of American letters entwined with philosophy and social engagement for years.

I have met many of Sade's biographers, indirectly, through their texts such as Bataille, Barthes, Klossowski, Annie le Brun, and more directly, in person, Gilbert Lely and his wife Marie-Francoise. However, among them Acker was one of the best in the respect that she never told any difference between the act of writing and the act of living one's life. And just like Sade himself, she took writing for life as much as she took literature for the means of escaping from the prison-house of language, as the means to evade saturation and entropy, as the only way to avoid the refraction of mirrors and get out of the Cartesian maze into the land of absolute freedom.

"...He (de Sade) shattered mirror after mirror; behind every mirror stood another mirror; behind all mirrors, nothingness sits. De Sade wrote in order to seduce us, by means of his labyrinths of mirrors, into nothingness./ De Sade wanted to show or to teach us who we are." (**Bodies of Work**). When Acker writes about De Sade, she writes about herself, about the writer's desire to use his/her imagination, that is, language. She desires to metamorphose both the body's discourse and the language discourse into the surreal reality. As the imagination is basically sexless, Acker, the great feminist, basically does not believe in feminism, in the dual categories of male/female, body/discourse and emotion/

logos. She believes in the eternal energy of writing things down and at the same time enacting them, thus she ferociously writes, on both sides of the Atlantic during the 70s, 80s and the 90s. Born and raised in New York City, she claimed that she had to sell her own blood and get one of her first pieces, "Black Tarantula," published.

I religiously held this book in my arms all the way from San Diego to San Francisco while on my way to visit Kathy during my first trip to the U.S. in the early 80s. The book was full of vivid colors, a sort of a naked existential scream filled with Baroque humor, as it was an all-forgiving book, the way Else Lasker-Schuler forgave the Nazis everything in an earlier era of early Expressionism.

In 1986 I started translating her "Great Expectations" into Serbian; it was a difficult text, split both vertically and horizontally, some strange genre of a feminist text that at the same time claimed and transcended feminist writing. I wrote a letter to her and asked her to give us the Author's royalties: the publishers in former Yugoslavia had no money to print the text; it was always the same repetitive story.

She responded and her answer was severe: she appreciated my writing, and she would try to help me out but she thought that no one had any right to flirt with the notions of poverty and revolution. Poverty is the question of one's choice, she said, one has to put up with it rather than whine over it considering it a gross social problem that writers have to brag about.

However, I went ahead and published my translation of "Great Expectations," and then the one of her book "Don Quixote." My grandfather was an anarchist as well, and I did not believe in the predominacy of the "great" languages over the small ones, nor I believed in any

advice given to me by a senior writer. I saw her that same year in the crowded room of the Poetry Project in New York City—she had just given a reading, small, engaging figure that she was, radiating warmth from the distance, she appeared extremely combative but at the same time benevolent.

And then she went to live in England where she stayed for a very long time, some time before the bad boy of American publishing, Ira Silverberg, decided to take her oeuvre into his hands, thus he founded the postmodern enterprise "the Serpent's Tail." When the serpent started eating his own tail, Acker started deconstructing her own writing and just about that time she became ill. She moved to San Francisco and started feeding herself of vitamins—she continued writing brilliant art criticism though, with her dark easel, in the empire of Sinesthesia. It was followed by her novel "Empire of the Senseless" in which many of her fellow-artists shared their parallel destinies.

It is said that she died in a hospital in Tijuana because she did not believe in chemotherapy—it is more likely that Acker believed in the absolute freedom of body, even that of the virus, in its freedom to live, to copulate, and to get multiplied wherever and whenever it wants to. Her great friend and a fellow-sufferer William Burroughs has written on a jacket of her book of essays which came out just a few months before she died: "Acker is a postmodern Colette with echoes of Cleland's Fanny Hill."

It is quite unkind of her that she left us so rapidly—she left me quite sad and surprised, shivering each time I face a mirror.

NINA ZIVANCEVIC
PARIS, DECEMBER, 1997

An Interview

with

BERNADETTE MAYER

by
Lisa Jarnot



photo by Marie Warsh

Bernadette Mayer is the author of numerous books of poetry, including three forthcoming publications—*Another Smashed Pinecone* (United Artists), *The Studying Hunger Journals* (Hard Press), and a yet to be titled collection from New Directions. Over the last thirty years her work and ideas have played an essential part in the development of experimental poetry in the United States. This interview was conducted in her apartment on East 4th Street in Manhattan on December 1, 1997.

Jarnot: Do you remember the first poem you ever wrote?

Mayer: Well, actually the first poem that I ever wrote was a poem that I wrote for an assignment, about leaves. We had this assignment at school, that was our homework. So I wrote this great poem about leaves. I think it's not extant anymore.

Jarnot: Did it rhyme?

Mayer: No. It was a good poem though. I got an A.

Jarnot: So that was in Brooklyn?

Mayer: No, that was in New Rochelle.

Jarnot: So that was when you were in college. You were an undergraduate?

Mayer: Yeah. I didn't really start writing until I was about 17.

Jarnot: So how did you get from New Rochelle to the Lower East Side?

Mayer: Well, that was very fast actually. New Rochelle is horrible, as you might imagine. At the time it was a Catholic women's college, and they threw me out. But they couldn't figure out why. Their reason was because I read Freud, and they didn't allow their psychology majors to read Freud until their senior year because it might be a threat to their faith. And I wore sandals. I broke all of their rules. But the real reason was that I wanted to get out of there. I only went there to please my mother. And then, you know, everybody in my family died and I left New Rochelle as soon as my uncle died, because there was no more reason to stay there. I hated it. And for two weeks I went to Barnard, and that was like a two-hour trip from Brooklyn to Barnard. Forget it. So then I moved

to the Lower East Side.

Jarnot: Did you know people here or did you just move here?

Mayer: No. I just moved here because I knew it was inexpensive.

Jarnot: When did you first meet poets?

Mayer: At the New School. I took a class with Bill Berkson and I met all these poets. Frances LeFevre was in my class, and Michael Brownstein. And then I starting hanging out with Peter Schjeldahl and then he introduced me to Ted Berrigan. And then Kenward Elmslie used to have big parties at the time, with big boxes of rolled joints and stuff. That was 1965 maybe.

Jarnot: Did you spend time with visual artists?

Mayer: Well I used to edit *O to 9* magazine with Vito Acconci. We didn't really hang out with the visual artists though, we just published them.

Jarnot: What was the idea behind *O to 9*?

Mayer: It was pretty much the same idea that there is behind any magazine—to create a great environment for our own work and to publish all the things that we both loved to see published. So we started publishing the works of Robert Smithson, and the journals of Jasper Johns. You know, these really interesting things, but I don't think too many people were publishing them at the moment, or at least we never read them.

Jarnot: How much were you influenced by New York School writing?

Mayer: Well, you know, I had this incredible resistance to any New York writing. I really didn't want to be influenced by it. So I wasn't. I guess I am now, but I wasn't then. We had such a strong resistance that I was going out with Ted Berrigan for a while and Ted and Ron would do these collaborations and send them to *O to 9* and we would never publish them. We published one called "Furtive Days". But we would never publish them and I guess it was because of their style or something. I really couldn't figure out why it was. I used to go to a lot of those avant-garde concert performance events with John Cage and Yoko Ono. They were pretty amazing. I always

liked those. I think they influenced me much more than any of the writing.

Jarnot: What did you think of the poets on the Lower East Side?

Mayer: I was very inspired. I was so happy to be around poets all the time. And then I was reading. I embarked upon this project of reading all of the long books. That was my theory—I could just read a lot of long poetry books that I had never read.

Jarnot: So which ones did you read?

Mayer: I read the *Cantos*, and all of T.S. Eliot. I didn't have too much to do. After I fell in love with Ed Bowes, we lived in Syracuse for a while and then I got pregnant and Ed got thrown out of school, and his parents freaked out and they sent him to a psychiatrist in Ardsley. So I had nothing to do for about a year and I had enough money to pay my rent, so I just read all these books. And I used to listen to WBAI at night and write.

Jarnot: What do you think of Eliot? Was he an influence on you?

Mayer: No. Never. I'm sorry, I wasn't impressed by Eliot.

Jarnot: What was the best thing you read?

Mayer: Well, it was around that time that Bill Berkson told me I was writing too much like Gertrude Stein, whom I had never heard of. So I started reading Gertrude Stein and that was pretty inspiring. I guess I liked her work and I also liked reading philosophy. Like all those amazing philosophy books. Like Kierkegaard and Heidegger and all the great philosophy books. Much better than going to school.

Jarnot: How old were you?

Mayer: I was 19. We used to order all our books from Blackwell's in London because they were cheaper. So we would send these great long lists to Blackwell's, and get back these bills for like 30 dollars and we'd get amazing books. And I read all the works of William Carlos Williams. I read Djuna Barnes and that was interesting. I mean I'm sure I read a lot of things.

Jarnot: What do you think has changed in the poetry world since the 60s?

Mayer: Well. It went through this period of being very social, and now it's much less social.

Jarnot: Maybe it's because people work more.

Mayer: Yeah, I think so. Jobs. Like it used to be very easy to live without a job. But now when I teach a workshop all of my students have jobs. Like real 9-to-5 jobs. So that's changed. And I think more people are writing. And what's changed a lot is that there are more women writers. When I was first writing we only knew of a few women poets, like Barbara Guest and Diane diPrima. So it's great to see more women writers. That's why I was so honored to read with Barbara Guest. And I remember when I met Diane diPrima, which was also amazing—to meet your childhood heroes.

Jarnot: Right. That's one good thing about being a poet.

Mayer: Yeah. Like if you start a magazine or a reading series you have an excuse to write to almost anybody. I mean literally anybody, so that's the reason to do it. That's why we did it. We started our magazine so we could write stupid letters to Robert Smithson. And we were so honored to write to Jasper Johns. I mean nobody was inaccessible. Everybody wanted to publish their work. It was great. It still is actually. I mean I get on the phone now and call up anybody and invite them to give a lecture and chat with them. It's a great privilege.

Jarnot: What about the 70s and 80s scene in New York? What about the Language scene? You were at the church.

Mayer: 1971 was when I did the workshop and a lot of the Language people were in the workshop, secretly learning what they needed to know. We used to talk about Lacan. It was a great workshop.

Jarnot: What did you think of Language writing?

Mayer: Well, I encouraged it. I never thought it would reach these proportions. I always thought it was a great idea. I'm for all kinds of writing. I never knew Language Poetry would become so exclusive. I mean Language Poetry is fine, but it's one kind of poetry. Someone said to a

friend of mine recently "Your book is filled with all different kinds of poetry." I mean, why not? Are you supposed to write only one kind of poetry? I don't think so. I love Louis Zukofsky's translations of Catullus, which are not translations, they're just mimicking the sound of the Latin, and they're beautiful, they're great. What Americans really seem to find difficult is when something doesn't make sense. They find it really hard and boring, what's it all about? It seems like you can just enjoy the sounds of words without any other meaning rearing its ugly head. Why bother. Who cares? It's just that people watch t.v. and they're made to think that things are very simple and clear, because that's the way they are on t.v. And everyone thinks that everything should be that way.

Jarnot: Do you think your relation to the poetry scene has changed? Do you feel more at ease? I mean, as an "established" poet.

Mayer: In the world of the St. Mark's Church poetry scene it's easier to exist. Years ago when you walked into St. Mark's Church it was like a pickup scene. I mean the difference is that now I really know how I feel about poetry, and that I really love listening to poetry. In the beginning I didn't really know that. I mean I guess I did, but I didn't know that I did. So it's really great. A lot of readings that we go to, I'd prefer to be invisible and just listen to the work. I wish there was a poetry series on t.v. so you could listen to poetry all day long; the social scene doesn't really make it at all. It used to be much more fun. People used to make love in the church belfry and on the pews. You know, it was a lot of fun. What was more interesting about the sixties, that doesn't seem to be true now, is that sex was more predominant. Unless maybe I'm just missing it. So I'm still regressive in that sense, like when I tell my kids about various types of birth control, and then I suddenly realize that they can't make love without the fear of getting AIDS or something. I mean, and sex is totally different than it used to be. I guess a lot of people really don't pay attention.

Jarnot: What do you think of monogamy?

Mayer: Oh, I think it sucks. Yeah, I'm against monogamy. That's an easy one. Always have been. But you know, people in the world don't feel that way. Even in the sixties, people used to go around saying how great faithfulness was. And like if a couple stays together and celebrates their 50th wedding anniversary everyone thinks that's a great thing. I think it's a terrible thing, especially for women. I think it's an awful thing, but nobody will admit it. It's like a moral issue. I mean monogamy works if the woman is really content to do all the cooking and cleaning and be a housewife, and then it works. And that's why there are all those couples who celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary. I mean I can't believe that's what they have to do.

Jarnot: What about marriage?

Mayer: I'm against marriage. The only reason I'll get married now is if someone needs a green card and will pay me a lot of money. Then I'll do it.

Jarnot: What's your idea of utopia?

Mayer: Well it's all in that book. [Utopia, United Artists, 1984]

Jarnot: It seems like a lot of your early projects are about consciousness, exploring that. What did you think you were going to find out by doing that?

Mayer: Good question. I've always been interested in the brain and consciousness. I mean it's amazing that I had a cerebral hemorrhage and now I see all these neurologists and am concerned with all those things in a different way. I think it's great actually. I shouldn't say that. I learned in the hospital that you're not supposed to think a cerebral hemorrhage is interesting in any way. Otherwise you get accused of having a sense of unreality. One nurse actually said to me "You don't realize what happened to you."

Jarnot: What do you think of the medical system?

Mayer: I think we should all be able to use our health insurance to see homeopaths if we want to. I think the medical system stinks. And I think doctors must take a course in

medical school on how not to tell the truth and how not to answer questions. Because if you ask the doctors a question, they won't tell you they don't know, because that's against the rules. A doctor is not supposed to not know something. So they just make up some phony answer which is not true. And I can't find a neurologist who knows about dreams. I mean I finally found one in a book, but in real life never. And I guess I've been spoiled by seeing a psychiatrist who was a doctor, and he was a neurologist, and I was totally spoiled. I could just ask him whatever question I wanted and he would actually answer, and if he didn't know he would say I don't know. It's a very simple thing to say. But the only valuable thing a neurologist has ever told me is this one guy said in medical school he was told to take PABA to remember dreams. And that works for a while.

Jarnot: And you've been having dreams again?

Mayer: Yeah. I have them if I take this drug called Xanax—it induces dreams—but that's problematic because how can you take that much Xanax? And that's the only way I can remember dreams, so one day I hope to come up with another solution.

Jarnot: Do you still use information from your dreams in poems? Have you been incorporating that?

Mayer: Yeah I can, but at the moment I don't because I don't have enough memory of dreams to do it. I mean it used to be an integral part of my work, but at the moment I'm writing mostly about reality. (laughs)

Jarnot: When you were in the hospital, how did the doctors and nurses react to the fact that you were a poet?

Mayer: Oh. Amazingly. They would say to me all the time "Say something poetic." They never used the word poetry as a noun. "Do something poetic." And they would hover over my shoulder when I was using the computer to see what I typed. Well, those weren't the doctors, they were the cognitive therapists.

Jarnot: Do you think that you figured out anything about consciousness from having that experience?

Mayer: Oh yeah, definitely. But what I've mainly figured out is that

**SAINT JOSEPH
COLLEGE
WRITERS' WEEKEND
JUNE 12-14, 1998**

FICTION and POETRY:

**Stacey Levine,
John Yau,
and C.D. Wright**

*For information call
(860)232-4571, Ext. 358 or
write to:*

*Dennis Barone,
Program Director,
Writers' Weekend
Saint Joseph College,
West Hartford, CT 06117*

really fascinating things have been happening to me for the last three years, and nobody asks me about them. Nobody seems to care. I can't get a straight answer from anybody.

Jarnot: You mean like doctors?

Mayer: Yeah. I mean they all think I'm imagining it. I saw some optometrist and I told him I couldn't read because I was seeing weird squiggly orange and green shapes on the page, and he looked at me askance, to put it nicely, and then about six months later he said "yeah, I think probably you were right about what you said because I just read it in a book." So it's been very frustrating. I mean it would be great if somebody was really interested in what was happening to me, and if it continues the way it is now, I'm going to be forced to write a book about it, which I don't think is the book I want to write. But I would love to talk about it. I mean when I first left the hospital I was desperate for someone to talk to and I really thought that was a

Granary Books for 1998:

A Secret Location on the Lower East Side: Adventures in Writing 1960-1980.

By Rodney Phillips and Steve Clay with a preface by Jerome Rothenberg. Illus. catalog for the exhibition at the Berg Collection, NY Public Library (42nd St & 5th Ave)
Jan 24-July 25, 1998
(pub date circa Apr 1)

Ted Berrigan: An Annotated Checklist by Aaron Fischer.

With a preface by Lewis Warsh. Illustrated with over thirty never-before-published "literary pictures," collaborations between Berrigan and George Schneeman.
(pub date circa Apr 1)

Artists' Books: The Cutting Edge of Reading by Renée Riese

Hubert and Judd D. Hubert. A major study of contemporary artists' books by two eminent scholars. (pub date circa Oct 1)

Figuring the Word: Essays on Books, Writing & Visual Poetics

by Johanna Drucker. Selected writings by one of the foremost thinkers on the book.
(pub date circa Oct 1)

Other forthcoming books include works by Jackson Mac Low, Franz Kamin, John Yau, Robert Creeley, Lyn Hejinian, Bernadette Mayer, Jack Spicer, Alison Knowles & Larry Fagin.

Granary Books

568 Broadway #403 NYC 10012
212 226 5462 sclay@interport.net
www.granarybooks.com

Book publisher and dealer in art and literary archives, manuscripts and libraries. By appointment only.

possible thing, and somebody had told me that if you put some kind of statement or question on the Internet that you'll find a person—that it's inevitable, you'll have to find a person. So I did that and the only response I got was from this doctor who said "If you can't remember your dreams, it's important not to forget your aspirations." (laughs) and he signed it, Doctor So-and-So. I mean my collection of silly statements about dreams is endless. So it would be nice to know a doctor, it would be nice to know a neurologist, it would be nice to be able to ask questions and have them answered. I mean it's tiring to be the person who has all these thoughts and they don't go anywhere and nobody seems to care about them. I know I'm complaining.

Jarnot: You're writing again. How has your writing changed?

Mayer: It's changed a lot. I feel like a different person. I was thinking I should have a new name, and to start a new kind of writing. At the moment I'm writing these epigrams, and it's amazing. I started writing epigrams because Lee Ann Brown created this game where there were a pile of form cards and a pile of content cards. And every time I would draw out a form card it would be an epigram. So I started writing all these epigrams, and then I realized that it was very easy to write them, and all I had to do was close my eyes and think about anything at all. And epigrams are an amazing form because they're so brief. So that's what I'm doing now. And/or writing a book about the iguana maybe.

Jarnot: The iguana in the other room?

Mayer: Yes. Well it's hard not to. He's right next to my desk.

Jarnot: What are the projects that you haven't done yet that you'd like to do?

Mayer: Uh. I'd like to get rich. You mean writing projects?

Jarnot: Yeah, writing projects.

Mayer: I don't know. Good question. While I was in the hospital I had this dream that—I mean it persisted for about a year too, and I thought it was real—that in *The Desires of Mothers To Please Others In*

Letters [Hard Press, 1993], I had written a poem for each prose piece, and that if people read that, they would learn how to write poetry. So, maybe that's a project. (laughs) I've written so many poems, they're everywhere. I don't know exactly where they are everywhere, but everywhere I look I find more poems. So, it would be nice to find all the poems.
Jarnot: That's a good project. What about experiments? Are there writing experiments that are still useful for you from the original experiments list?

Mayer: I like doing the free associative experiment, where you write whatever.

Jarnot: How did those experiment lists come about?

Mayer: We put them together in my first workshop. The workshop students and I put them together. There's a project I'd like to do, but it's not exactly a writing project. But I'd like computers to be able to record everything you think and see. To be like the brain, and to write that out. And apparently eventually computers will be able to do this. That Wim Wenders movie *The End of the World* is sort of like that. And somebody said to me "who would read it?" But I'm thinking that I would read it. I would love to read it. Like if you had all these documents of everybody's experience. It would be amazing.

Jarnot: That's kind of like a high tech Olson project. Scanning and mapping.

Mayer: And then you could just take part of it and publish it in a poetry magazine. I like taking prose works and changing them into poetry and vice versa. Well, I just want to make some money. I want to start a wildlife refuge. Those are my plans. I know exactly where to do it but I don't have the cash.

Jarnot: Where?

Mayer: In East Chatham, where we can build those wooden walkways over the pond and over the swamp, and people can walk on them and observe. We can bring the beavers back. Beavers and herons and all kinds of wildlife. So that's my aspiration. See I remembered my aspirations.

TELL IT SLANT: GENDER AND WRITING

by
Brenda Coultas

The following piece was presented during the 1997 Poetry Project Symposium as part of a panel called "Tell It Slant: Gender and Writing" which was moderated by poet Barbara Henning.

Sometimes I'm a woman and sometimes I'm a man. In 1977, I was a welder at Firestone Steel in Henderson, Kentucky, one of 5 women out of roughly 250 men. Later I was a park ranger, the one female out of a five-person squad. In these occupations, because they were largely male, I cross-dressed daily. I wore men's uniforms and looked like Barney from the old Andy Griffith Show. The shirts were loose because I lacked developed shoulders, and the pants fit snug in the rear and gaped around the waist because I had hips. These uniforms masked my sex and at the same time shaped it. The uniforms allowed me to subvert the shape of the "male."

The sexual identity in my work reflects the gender shifts that occur in daily life. When I think of gender and writing, I think of Woolf's call that "the book must be adapted to the body." So I set out to record my body and its adventures in the world hoping to create such a book.

I appropriated the title "Dream Life in a Case of Transvestitism" from a 1960s Abnormal Psychology book that I found in the stacks at the University of Colorado library. The original consisted of a record of the dreams of a married, closeted transvestite and his dreams of being discovered, particularly in public places by his mother-in-law. (According to case notes, after recording 600 dreams the subject disappeared, and they were never able to establish contact with him/her again). In my dreams, the narrator relates a series of dreams that trick her into revealing her true sex.

At a party for girls only, I wear a can-can dress with big kittens on the skirt. It has a velcro zipper that I like to open and close. We take our clothes off. They all turn out to be boys. Later, I found out that I went on the wrong day.

Here clothes function as outside indicators. Once removed the real self is revealed, the underlying gender uncloaked. The real self is glimpsed as subconscious desires are played out.

In "The Rise of Sex Towards God," the narrator is speaking about the experience of being sketched by a psychic artist. While she is talking, her interior world slips out:

Like the portrait of my spirit guides I paid to have drawn in pastels. I sat for several hours as the artist meditated and sketched and then meditated and sketched. When I saw the finished portrait I was appalled to find that the artist had drawn an angel with an extremely large cock.

To the shock of the narrator the artist has captured the energy surrounding her. The male aspects of her nature are unmasked, and her hidden self is revealed.

In my work, gender is another mask (out of the many we wear), a face presented to the world beneath which the individual resides. While my work has a feminist political overlay, at the bottom is the human striving to articulate its experience and beauty. Wearing the mask of female or male protagonist, performing this sleight of hand, has allowed me to upset expectations, to cross the imagery boundaries of sexual identity and to be myself whatever gender that may be.

Moscow in June: Russian Postmodern Poetry at the End of the Century

by Leonard Schwartz

When poets travel, they tend to travel alone—or else as romantic pairs, or possibly romantic trios. A group of poets converging for the singular purpose of poetry, in one of the most contested and chaotic cities of the century, Moscow, presents us then with a singular test of human patience. But patience, that protracted delirium, is one of the chief qualities required in the discovery of what comes next.

The occasion was a conference entitled **Closing The Millenium: Russian Poetry At The End of The Twentieth Century**, sponsored by the Russian Academy of Sciences and held in Moscow June 9th to 15th. Organized as an encounter between Russian poets and several invited American poets and Slavists, in back of the conference was a proposed anthology of Russian poetry in translation to be published by Talisman House, with the generous support of the Greve Foundation in both helping to get some of the Americans over in the first place and in making the book possible. The poet invitees from the States included myself, Edward Foster, John High (the general editor for the proposed anthology, former Fulbright Scholar in Moscow, and prolific translator from the Russian) and the Chinese poet Zhang Er. Also invited were the Slavists Thomas Epstein, Laura Weeks, and Vitaly Chernevetsky, and the former **Moscow Times** reporter Patrick Henry, each of whom will be editing a section of the anthology, and whose interests run from "the metaphysical" (Epstein), to the question of poetry and gender (Weeks), to gay writing in Russian (Chernevetsky), to the "Moscow poetry club scene" (Henry). (Lyn Hejinian and Gerald Janacek will also be involved in the editing of the book, although neither could make it to Moscow for the conference.) The poet and translator Alex Cigale was also on hand to provide insight, translation, and interpretation for the non-

Russian speakers like myself. A discussion of the issues of selection and translation the anthology raises, the warring claims of various aesthetic factions, meetings with journal editors, evening readings of the American poets translated into Russian and marathon readings of the Russian poets themselves, made up the substance of the week. Vadim Mesyats, Russian poet and Visiting Fellow at the Stevens Institute of Technology, was the impresario and general organizer for all of this exchange, while his father, Gennady Mesyats, a physicist and a branch head of the Russian Academy of Sciences, provided the conference with support and prestige.

For a non-Russian expert like myself, perhaps the place to begin is with a line from St. Petersburg poet Arkadii Dragomoshchenko. "Everything begins/with an error of vision, with the disintegration of the thing affixed to its inevitable unity": that from "Accidia," published in **Sulfur** in Hejinian's translation in 1985, one of the first translations of contemporary avant-garde Russian poetry to appear in American circles. (Although Dragomoshchenko didn't make it to Moscow, we did meet with him later in St. Petersburg.) "Everything begins/with an error of vision": this line parallels the phenomenology of travel in a foreign land, in which you know your perceptions are going to be distorted and strange...and at the same time, that they have subjective validity. It also parallels poetry, in the sense that composition is dependent on creative misreading, as well as translation—that necessary betrayal. Everything begins with an error in vision—and the poem, a fragment of that error, seeks in truth or in error to reverse it, in truth or in error to salvage the whole. Is the poem up to the task? At the Pushkin Fine Arts Museum in Moscow, at which the Gold of Troy is displayed (having been stolen from Turkey by the excavating Germans, and from the Germans by the

Soviets), I am struck by the fact that this wealthiest of legendary cities, basic to Western myth, is now most memorably present in the tiniest of its earrings, the most delicate of its jewels, while all the great walls and loud chariots are gone. Will our culture too be remembered by its tiniest fragments, those little gleaming pins of a Simon Pettet, the jewels of a Robert Creeley? And what of the Russian literary landscape, charged now with the energy of a political release but completely bankrupt in terms of any poetry economy? As Patrick Henry put it in the English language newspaper *The Moscow Times* in 1996, "the government has allowed literature, once the most policed of the arts, to develop or degenerate according to its own internal logic, to find its place in Russia's collapsed and cut-throat economy without providing significant support or opposition." Whatever is to emerge out of this latest of errors will itself be a new vision, as the "inevitable unity" of the Empire breaks up further and further.

The eradication of the given was also a note struck in a May 97 letter from Hejinian to John High, which John read in Russian translation at the opening night of the conference at a packed "Central House of Writers": "In American post-modern poetry, 'borders' have been at stake, under scrutiny, and up for reshaping, transgressing or destroying—borders delimiting genre, borders delimiting style, borders delimiting "personhood" (who speaks when writing is written)—a question which inevitably queries the borders delimiting gender. American post-modern poetry involves a lot of border-crossing. Is this true of Russian post-modern poetry? And what else is at issue in current Russian poetry? Reality?"

That evening each editor gave a short presentation on his/her interests. In the press after the formal presentation, I was inundated with books from different Russian poets, none of which I could read. I met a nuclear physicist who hadn't been paid in six months, had taken on a second job as a school teacher, for which he wasn't paid either, and so had taken on a third job as a night-watchman at a hotel, which did pay. If the economy is so bad that the nuclear physicists are working as night watchmen, where does that leave the poets? Interestingly, however, I met several other scientists during the week who claimed that since their technical, equipment-oriented fields had been defunded, the only way to carry on their research was with "a notebook and a pen," that is to say, through poetry, whose very lightness of material accoutrement has recommended it from the start. Poverty equalizes.

Ivan Zhadonov, a major figure and a poet available in book form to American readers (translated by High and Henry), was in attendance, even though he'd recently been forced to leave Moscow for his native Siberia (where he'd famously been born the "11th of twelve children"), not for political reasons but for economic ones. Along with poets like Alexei Parschikov (his book is available from Avec Books), Lev Rubenshtein and others, an older generation of writers, perhaps already familiar to Western readers, was well represented at the conference. But the afternoon and evening readings of June 12 and 13th at the Chekhov Center revealed many other interesting poets of the very sort the proposed anthology hopes to uncover.

Alexander Ulanov, a younger poet from the Eastern city of Samara, was one poet that stood

out. Conversant in both German and American poetry (he has translated both Ashbery and Duncan), several of us felt an immediate affinity. Janacek says of his poetry that "a lyrico-musical element is present uppermost", and that in some cases "the antecedent for a pronoun is puzzlingly ambiguous, an effect hard to render in English, where one must choose, for instance, between 'him' and 'it' when both might be meant." Here's one of the few available translations, from Janacek:

And he who was walking on the left
will step to the right,
and he who was walking on the right
will step to the left.
And each of my steps has its own dust
It settles on me
and becomes part of me.
And steps towards other dust.

Maria Maksimova, a historian by training and a member of the Moscow Writers Union, also was of immediate interest:

And now the same thought, the same words
again suck feeling into the region of the
solar plexus,
again the grass
swells with green light, exudes lemony grief.
Look, there under the tree, on the red
fallen leaves—
the same two people.

(translation: Laura Weeks)

In a session at the headquarters of the literary journal, *Arion*, at which editors of many journals spoke, Anatoley Kudrevitsky, the editor of *Archer*, himself a poet and translator, spoke of the lingering influence of Joseph Brodsky on literary aesthetics, and of the idea of a "poetics of silence" in which the words count as much for the silence

they make possible as for what they say themselves. Kudrevitsky, a samizdat poet who had to put up with a good deal of abuse during the Communist period and who has only been able to publish openly in recent years, argued that the role of the literary journal was to "anticipate a future or even read one," over and against Alexei Alekhin, *Arion's* editor, who claimed his journal offered a reflection of Russian poetry's total present. In the two readings for the Americans, one at the American Embassy and the other at Shakespeare and Company, an English language bookstore owned and run by Mary Duncan, John High was able to conjure up the presence of Nina Iskrenko, a leading Russian poet who died last year of cancer and with whom High enjoyed a special friendship.

Ultimately of course there were as many points of disagreement and dissonance as there were moments of recognition. From an American point of view it is no doubt astounding that so much time is still spent in Russia arguing about metrics versus "vers libre." (Perhaps it is of significance that Eliot's "The Waste Land," as an example, was published in translation in the 70s. By comparison, "The Waste Land" was published in translation in China in the 20s.) Nor was this argument generational: if anything, many of the younger poets, like for example Vasily Shubinsky of St. Petersburg, were the ones making the arguments for the centrality of rhyme and traditional systems of measure. In a double sense, then, the Russians and the Americans are speaking two different vocabularies.

Of course it is also problematic for me to look only for the markers familiar to my own vocabulary. Indeed, if the question of ethno-

centrism is always the central one in the encounter of literary constructions and categories, this was especially the case in the Russia of 1997. That is because on the larger scale Moscow was awash in Western consumer imagery; McDonald's, Coca-Cola and Cindy Crawford have newly come to dominate the cityscape from every billboard and corner. And while a high official could conclude a talk at the Academy of Sciences with the remark that "everything Marx said about Communism was false; everything Marx said about capitalism was true," the prevailing mood was certainly one of a capitalist and Western-corporate embrace. What was our relationship, as "rich American anthologists" (rich in that High could pull off an anthology of Russian poetry that the Russians themselves probably could not at this point) to the commodity culture so clearly exerting its influence on the Russian scene? To the extent the American editors were actively seeking women and gay writers, "provincial" and "younger poets," all rubrics the Moscow crowd seemed to want to wholeheartedly reject as extraneous, I have no qualms about our asserting a potentially progressive influence. (The sexism of the Russian literary scene was startling.) The further questions of poetry, history and economic power remain perplexing.

It is true that the force of the icon is a two-way affair. If I was conscious of the ways in which our arrival coincided with the corporate makeover of the cityscape, I also noted the influence of the Russian icon on ways of thinking about American poetry; however imperceptibly, some of us were altered. The churches are on the upswing, and while it may be alarming that

after 80 years of Marx the Big Crutch still hasn't been thrown away, all the same the churches do house the icons: images that don't represent the Saints but *are* the Saints, or so the tradition says. So too the iconostasis—a frame for the idols, a dynamic manifestation, from behind which the voice of exquisite Russian choral music emerges, the faces of the singers hidden as the faithful bend. So that Edward Foster can argue that the poetry of Jack Spicer, for example, can best be understood in relationship to the theater of the iconostasis: the potential for a poetry that is communal and impersonal, being itself, beyond language and any of its representational distortions. So that Russian poet Mark Shatunovsky can write while discussing Ivan Zhadonov: "At the rupture of two eras—the old lie weakened and the new lie not yet in force—he saw in the emerging dawn not a distorting mirror but a genuine eternity where modernism and realism, avant-gardism and conservatism, 'the eleventh son of a peasant family' and the refined intellectual all were reconciled. And in the reflected light of that eternity all the new deceptions now raining down on our heads continue to be invalid." If toolwise we can use this "eternity" to get out from our own downpour of untruths, our poetry altered to other hearing, then what began as raw error will end in subversive song.

*Leonard Schwartz's most recent book **Words Before the Articulate: New and Selected Poems** was published by Talisman House Press in 1997.*

poetry project

calendar

events

FEBRUARY 2 MONDAY

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

4 WEDNESDAY

Will Alexander & Samuel Delany

Will Alexander has three books forthcoming: *Towards the Primeval Lightning Field* (O Books), *Above the Human Nerve Domain* (Pavement Saw Press), and *Impulse and Nothingness* (Sun & Moon), and has poems included in the second volume in *Poems for the Millennium*. Samuel Delany is the author of several novels as well as several book-length collections of literary criticism including *The Motion of Light and Water: Sex and Science Fiction in the East Village*, and *Silent Interviews: On Language, Race, Sex, Science Fiction and Some Comics*. He is currently a professor of Comparative Literature at the University of Massachusetts.

6 FRIDAY

Ruth Margraff & Robert Ashley

Librettist Ruth Margraff's recent work includes *The Elektra Fugues*, *Centaur Battle of San Jacinto*, and *Wallpaper Psalm*. She is the recipient of a 1996-97 McKnight Advancement Grant. Robert Ashley is the former director of the influential ONCE group and the Center for Contemporary Music at Mills College. His most recently produced opera is *Balseros*, commissioned by the Florida Grand Opera. [10:30 pm]

9 MONDAY

Tatsuhiko Ishii & Meaghan Gannett

Born in Yokohama in 1952, Tatsuhiko Ishii is a poet, drama critic, and journalist. He has published three collections of tanka: *Nanukamado*, *Haka*, and *Bathhouse*. He presently works for the Asahi Shimbun. Hiroaki Sato, the translator of *Breeze Through Bamboo*: Kanshi Ema Saiko, will be reading the English translations of Ishii's work. Meaghan Gannett is a multi-instrumentalist, singer and songwriter.

11 WEDNESDAY

Adrian Castro & Bruce Andrews

Adrian Castro's book, *Cantos to Blood & Honey*, recently appeared from Coffee House Press. The Miami Herald Tribune writes, "Castro has long been layering Spanish, English, and Yoruba dialects, musical sound, and drum rhythms, Cuba, Miami, Africa, and Santeria. He seems well on his way to inventing a brand new patois." His work has also appeared in the anthologies *Paper Dance: 55 Latino Poets*, and *A Century of Cuban Writers in Florida*. Bruce Andrews is the author of over

from Vintage in 1998. She has also published in *The Village Voice*, *The Nation*, and *The New York Times*. An Indian of the diaspora, Ameen Amir's first novel, *Bombay Talkie*, was published by High Risk/Serpent's Tail Books. Her short fiction has been anthologized in *The Flaming Spirit: Writing from the Asian Women Writers Collective* and *Low, Low Rent: The Best of the Portable Lower Eastside*. She is currently working on a fictionalized story of her grandfather's four wives. Born in South India, Vijay Balakrishnan is the author of two volumes of poetry and the co-author of several feature screenplays, one of which, *Karma Local*, is now in post-production. *Fifth World* is his first novel. [10:30 pm]

23

Universus from the Bronxside

Universus from the Bronxside is a collaborative poetry group from the Point Community Center in the Bronx. Their widely acclaimed performance work has been featured at Wetlands and the Nuyorican Poet's Cafe, among other venues.

25 WEDNESDAY

Merry Fortune, Peter Bushyeager & Miriam Solan

Merry Fortune is a musician and poet currently living in New York. She has a book forthcoming from Linear Arts Press called *Blind Stints*. She is also the former coordinator of Monday Night Readings at the Poetry Project, and is the co-editor of *Pagan Place* with Robert Martens. Peter Bushyeager's work has appeared in *Exquisite Corpse*, *New American Writing*, and more recently in *The World and Pagan Place*. He currently lives in New York and is working on a historical review of the first two generations of the New York School for a forthcoming Talisman House book. Miriam Solan's most recent book, *A Woman Combining*, was published by Hard Press in 1997. Her work has also appeared in many literary journals including *Poetry New York*, *The World*, *East Coast Anthology*, *lingo*, and *Torque*. Her work has also been choreographed and performed at The Cubiculo, La Mama, and Theater of the Open Eye in New York.

MARCH 2 MONDAY

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

4 WEDNESDAY

Douglas Rothschild & Jack Callom

Douglas Rothschild's most recent publications include *Matchbook* (Situations Press, 1997) and *Christmas Card from All Pops*. He is also the author of *Theatine Landau Off Rochet*, and *Other Timely Experiments*. Lit/writ/03, *Critical Theory: an Appendage*, and *ooovraH: Uncollected*

presently works with the music group Backworld. Thaddeus Rutkowski's book, *Journey to the Center of My Id*, was recently published by Linear Arts. Tessa Hughes-Freeland's films have been screened throughout the U.S., Europe, Australia, and Scandinavia. Joe Lobell has appeared in numerous venues including La Mama and the Knitting Factory. [10:30 pm]

16

Emmanuel Xavier & Emily XYZ

Emmanuel Xavier is a slam champion for the Nuyorican Poet's Cafe and the author of the recent book, *Pier Queen*. Emily XYZ is a poet and recording artist who has been featured in the five-part PBS series *The United States of Poetry*. Her work has been published in the *PoemFone Anthology* from St. Martin's Press, *The United States of Poetry* (Abrams), *Aloud: Voices from the Nuyorican Poet's Cafe* (Holt), and in *Verbal Abuse and Sensitive Skin* magazines. [10:30 pm]

18 WEDNESDAY

March 18: Leonard Schwartz & Shuntaro Tanikawa

Leonard Schwartz is the author of *Words Before the Articulate: New and Selected Poems* (Talisman House), as well as of *Gnostic Blessing* (Goats & Compasses), *Exiles: Ends* (Red Dust Press), and *Objects of Thought, Attempts At Speech*. His poems have appeared of late in *The Five Fingers Review*, *Agni*, *The World*, *The Denver Quarterly* and *First Intensity*, among others. He lives in New York City. Shuntaro Tanikawa is the preeminent Japanese poet of his generation. He is the author of several books of poetry including *Floating the River in Melancholy* (Prescott Street Press) and is also a translator. He will be accompanied by three musicians, Kensaku Tanikawa, Mariko Takase, and Hirohiko Ohtsubo.

20

Peter Mathiessen & Robert Thurman

Robert Thurman is the professor of Indo-Tibetan studies in the Department of Religion at Columbia University, where he holds the Jey Tsong Khapa Chair and heads the American Institute of Buddhist Studies. His published works include *Tsong Khapa's Speech of Gold in the Essence of True Eloquence*, *Reason and Enlightenment in the Central Philosophy of Tibet*, *Wisdom and Compassion: The Sacred Art of Tibet* (co-authored with Rhic), *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, and *Essential Tibetan Buddhism*. Peter Mathiessen is a writer, naturalist, explorer and the founder of *The Paris Review*. His many books include *The Snow Leopard*, for which he won the National Book Award, *At Play in the Fields of the Lord*, *Killing Mr. Watson*, *The Tree Where Man Was Born* and *African Silences*. [10:30 pm]

23

Book Party and Signing for Carl Hancock Rux

Carl Hancock Rux will read from and sign his new book, *Pagan Opera*, to be published in March by Fly by Night Press in association with A Gathering of the Tribes. Rux's plays include *Song of Sad Young Men*, *Geneva Cottrell*, *Waiting for the Dog to Die*, and *Port Dream* in the American House of Image. In 1994, he was selected for "The New York Times Select Critics List of Thirty Artists Under the Age of Thirty Most Likely to

Adrian Castro's book, *Cantos to Blood & Honey*, recently appeared from Coffee House Press. The Miami Herald Tribune writes, "Castro has long been layering Spanish, English, and Yoruba dialects, musical sound, and drum rhythms, Cuban, Miami, Africa, and Santeria." He seems well on his way to inventing a brand new patois." His work has also appeared in the anthologies *Paper Dance: 55 Latino Poets*, and *A Century of Cuban Writers in Florida*. Bruce Andrews is the author of over twenty books of poetry and a recent collection of essays, *Paradise & Method: Poetics & Praxis* from Northwestern University Press. Aerial Magazine is publishing an anthology of essays on his work this Spring.

13 FRIDAY

Laurie Stone & Glenn O'Brien

Glenn O'Brien worked as the editor of Andy Warhol's *Interview* in the 1970s and later for *Rolling Stone*, *High Times*, and *Spin*. He edited Madonna's *SEX* and authored Madonna's *Girlly Show*. *SOAPBOX*, a collection of his essays from 1980 to 1997, was recently published by Imschoot, uigewers. His poems have appeared in *Verbal Abuse*, *Aperture*, and *ArtForum*. He is a 16 handicap golfer and ping pong player. Laurie Stone is the author of *Close to the Bone and Laughing in the Dark*. She is the theatre critic for *The Nation*. [10:30 pm]

16 MONDAY

Monday Blues: Post-Valentine's Special

An evening of post-Valentine's Day blues music and text, featuring vocalist Carla Cook, Ed Friedman, Artistic Director of the Poetry Project and author of *Mao & Matisse*, with poetry and guitar, and guest poets and musicians.

18 WEDNESDAY

Michael Gizzi & Carla Harryman

Michael Gizzi is the author of several books of poetry and his work has appeared in numerous magazines and anthologies. His most recent collection, *No Both*, was published in 1997 by Hard Press/The Figures. He currently lives in Lenox, Massachusetts and is a contributing editor for *Lingo* magazine. Carla Harryman's selected work, *There Never Was a Rose Without a Thorn* is available from *City Lights*. She is currently at work on a novel, *Gardener of Stars*, and an installation at the Cranbrook Museum based on their chair design collection. Her novella *The Words: After Carl Sandburg's Rootabaga Stories & Jean-Paul Sartre* is forthcoming from Sun & Moon.

20 FRIDAY

Zia Jaffrey, Ameen Amir, & Vijay Balakrishnan

Zia Jaffrey's book, *The Invisibles*, will be available in paperback

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

4 WEDNESDAY

Douglas Rothschild & Jack Collom

Douglas Rothschild's most recent publications include *Matchbook* (Situations Press, 1997) and *Christmas Card from All Pops*. He is also the author of *Theatine Landau Off Rochet*, and *Other Timely Experiments*, *Lit/writ103*, *Critical Theory: an Appendage*, and *ovvraH*. Uncollected *Works in Progress Volume 1*. He is currently working on a new journal entitled *Nortan Anthrax of Zaphod Beeblebrox*. Jack Collom was born in Chicago, grew up in the small town of Western Springs, moved to Colorado in his mid-teens & graduated from Fraser High School 1948 in a class of 4. Attended Forestry School at Colorado A&M, joined the US Air Force, wrote his first poems in Tripoli, Libya. Lived in Germany awhile, began 20 years of factory work. Replaced this vocation with that of free-lance teaching, mostly creative writing workshops with school children. He is the author of 13 books of poetry & a CD.

9 MONDAY

Denise Bell & Havelock Nelson

Denise Bell is an anthologized poet and a poetry community presence. Havelock Nelson is a journalist and essayist who co-wrote *Bring the Noise* with Michael Gonzalez. He is a staff writer for *Billboard* magazine.

11 WEDNESDAY

Kim Lyons & Myung Mi Kim

Kim Lyons is the author of several publications, including *Mettle*, in collaboration with poet Ed Epping (Granary Books, 1996). She also has work forthcoming in anthologies from *Talisman House* and *Sun and Moon* this year. Myung Mi Kim is the author of *Under Flag* (Kelsey Street Press, 1991), *Bounty* (Chax Press, 1995), and *Dura* (Sun & Moon Press, 1996). She currently teaches creative writing at San Francisco State University.

13

Below the Underdog: Nights on the Lower East Side

Readers for "Below the Underdog: Nights on the Lower East Side" will include Penny Arcade, who has toured the world twice with her sex and censorship show *Bitch! Dyke! Fag! Whore!* Legs McNeil is the co-author of the recently published *Please Kill Me: The Uncensored History of Punk*. Joseph Budenholzer has written and directed short films and plays, worked as a composer in the Cinema of Transgression, and performed with the proto-industrial rock band, *Foetus*. He

23

Book Party and Signing for Carl Hancock Rux

Carl Hancock Rux will read from and sign his new book, *Pagan Operetta*, to be published in March by Fly by Night Press in association with A Gathering of the Tribes. Rux's plays include *Song of Sad Young Men*, *Geneva Cottrell*, *Waiting for the Dog to Die*, and *Port Dream* in the American House of Image. In 1994, he was selected for "The New York Times Select Critics List of Thirty Artists Under the Age of Thirty Most Likely to Influence Culture." He has recently been commissioned by director George C. Wolfe to write the book for a new musical at The Joseph Papp Public Theater.

25 WEDNESDAY

Laynie Browne & Fanny Howe

Laynie Browne's most recent book of poetry, *Rebecca Letters*, was published by Kelsey Street Press in 1997. She is a graduate of the Creative Writing program at Brown University and she currently lives in Seattle, Washington. Fanny Howe is the author of over twenty books of poetry and fiction, including *Saving History*, *Famous Questions*, and *The Quietist*. Her most recent collection of poems, *One Crossed Out*, was published by Graywolf Press in 1997. She is a Professor of Writing and American Literature at the University of California at San Diego.

27

Robbie McCauley & Pamela Sneed

Robbie McCauley's serial performance works, which include *My Father and the Wars*, *Indian Blood*, and *Sally's Rape*, for which she received an Obie Award in 1992, are about the history of her family from the 19th century as a metaphor of an African American family surviving racism. *Shays' Rebellion*, her most recent historical performance piece, was created and performed at Mount Holyoke College where she is a visiting lecturer. Pamela Sneed is a New York-based poet, solo performer and actress. She is the author of *Imagine Being More Afraid of Freedom*, forthcoming from Henry Holt in 1998. She has performed at many venues, including Lincoln Center, The Whitney Museum of Art, and The Public Theater. [10:30 pm]

30

Ken Thompson & Josie McKee

Ken Thompson is a musician, teacher and longtime poet. His work has most recently appeared in the German magazine, *Orte*. His performance pieces are *Prayers on the Precipice* and a new work titled *Sanctum*. He is currently editing a collection of his poems. Josie McKee has published art reviews in *Art World Network* and read at Biblio's Cafe in Nov. with Griffen Hansbury & Emily Bass.

The Poetry Project is located at St. Mark's Church in the Bowery
131 East 10th Street, New York City 10003
<http://www.poetryproject.com>

All events are \$7 and begin at 8 PM unless otherwise noted. Programs are subject to change.
For information call 212 674-0910

book reviews



photo courtesy Hard Press

FRANK LIMA

Inventory: New & Selected Poems

Hard Press (PO Box 184, West Stockbridge, MA 01266), 1997, 201 pages, \$12.95.

In both literal and figurative senses Frank Lima is a poet who really cooks. A master chef whose adolescent education took place in the school of hard knocks among hustlers, whores and junkies of Spanish Harlem, he's also a semi-legendary poet, quietly revered by cognoscenti of the art.

Inventory brings back into print the early poems that caused Lima to be dubbed a naif genius by New York literary critics of the Sixties, while updating us as to the fine poems he's continued, somewhat intermittently, to produce since then.

Lima's stylistic signature emerges early in this book and persists: a sensual, slangy musicality, informed by a sense of humor streetwise beyond its years and composite of equal parts courage and desperation.

Raw, gritty, nery and switchblade-like, Lima's poems of the late 1950s and 1960s—written when he was in his early twenties—dance confidently and with remarkable poise out on the anx-

ious high-wire of their own edgy, bravura energy: "I'd swish through the door/tiptoeing/goofed on speedballs/with a yellow-jaundice twinkle/in my glassy eyes..."

Discovering startling flowers of delicate sensation in shooting galleries and jails ("catnaps/glassine dreams/of golden cookers/dollar bill collars/hypos—like glass hummingbirds," these poems allow artificial paradises to blossom on the meanest streets and in the unlikeliest lower depths of a hellish urban underworld.

"Abuela's Wake," a poem that unfolds uneasily in the presence of the youth's dead grandmother, evokes a scary inner-city childhood world with convincing intensity. Here, amid the extremity of family grief, something like a lost innocence is restored, as wonder and dread peep through a self-protective smart-punk attitude. "Mom screamed barbed wire/in my shoe-high ears/my stickball smile fell off my face.../the wake's witch/wearing her mothball smile/held the black rosary/like a snake with a Catholic head/it still hisses in my bed/dribbling the wooden words/Dios te salve Maria/Dios te salve Maria/outside/the mouth of December tinked on the windows."

More searing still is "Mom I'm All Screwed Up," an unforgettable and deeply unsettling narrative of incest. Here we are truly with the poet inside the belly of the beast, looking out, "Moth-eyed/by the neon signs," like a dreamer in a nightmare unable to scream.

Perhaps it goes without saying that for all the early poems' temerity in the face of trauma, the life events Lima inventories don't add up to many happy endings. Yet through their murky, endarkened, semi-surreal subcurrents, strange lights of tender feeling gleam up unexpectedly, like lost treasure

glinting from the rot and wreckage in which it is imbedded.

Poetry has never been Frank Lima's vocation in the strict sense, though there's some poetic justice in the vocational choice he did make by obtaining a degree in culinary arts and establishing himself as a professional chef. Linking the two kinds of craft is the palpable sensuousness of his writing.

Eros has inspired this poet's taste buds from the first. "Pudgy," one early romantic invocation, addresses its teenage Muse as "my chocolate Princess"; another, "Mulata," catches the poet "Chewing Juicy Fruit" as he proceeds to wander "The chesnut thighbone avenue" over "your softsilk body...A cherry-nostrum wonder."

And Lima's palate only refines with time. Consider the delicious little 1994 lyric, "Te Amo": "when I think of you/each day/is my daily bread/and a little sea/of peas in my soup."

Not that for this poet-chef the wisdom of food isn't also occasionally cosmic. Lobsters in a cooking pot, in one prose-poem meditation, appear as "hot/balloons that frighten the kiss of death." Elsewhere—in an extravagant, playful "Ode to Julia Child"—"A cream soup is a recurring moment/From another life."

Inventory rates stars across the board in this poetry critic's Guide Bleu.

TOM CLARK

Selected Letters of Charles Reznikoff (1917-1976)

Black Sparrow Press (24 Tenth Street, Santa Rosa, CA 95401), 1997, 340 pages, \$17.50.

In 1948 William Carlos Williams sent a letter to Charles Reznikoff

detail
By th
book
almo
neve
Willi
it cu
illnes
thrill
frien
Zuko
cont
Press
Rezn
orga
print
of o
print
not
that
artis
did
From
care
hims
to
Russ
He o
his
fear
agai
dest
min
like
lette
T
Rezn
writ
Mar
frie
of I
not
alth
in g
suit
tion
his
own
men
ear
ene
ing
rec
int
ach
fro
did
suc
ble
gro

wreckage

n Frank
ct sense,
c justice
he did
egree in
ng him-
Linking
e palpa-
iting.

s poet's
"Pudgy,"
ocation,
e as "my
nother,
e poet
he pro-
chesnut
"your
nostrum

y refines
delicious
: "when
my daily
as in my

chef the
o occa-
rs in a
e-poem
not/bal-
kiss of
extrav-
o Julia
a recur-
er life."
ross the
s Guide

CLARK

Reznikoff

h Street,
97, 340

Williams
Reznikoff

detailing his excited response to **By the Waters of Manhattan**, a book Reznikoff gave Williams almost twenty years earlier. "I never so much as opened it," Williams wrote, "except to look at it cursorily. And now, during an illness, I have read it and I am thrilled with it." They had been friends many years. With Louis Zukofsky and George Oppen they contributed to the Objectivist Press, an undertaking whose spirit Reznikoff summarized as "an organization of poets who are printing their own work and that of others they think ought to be printed." Unfortunately, it did not last long. In the same letter that he calls him a "first-rate artist" Williams asks why Reznikoff did not persist in his writing. From the beginning of his poetic career Reznikoff set a course for himself that he was to remain true to throughout his life. His Russian grandfather wrote verse. He died on a business trip. When his wife found the poetry she feared it may say something against the authorities, and destroyed it. Reznikoff was determined not to let that (or anything like it) happen to his work. His letters reveal that determination.

The letters span 60 years of Reznikoff's life. The bulk are written to two people, his wife Marie Syrkin and his childhood friend Albert Lewin, over a period of 15 years (1929-1943). This is not a literary correspondence although the letters communicate in great detail his literary pursuits. He writes of his transactions with editors and publishers, his endeavor to print and bind his own books on a press in his basement. He writes of his struggle to earn a paycheck and retain the energy needed to devote to writing. And his successes are duly recorded. It is a remarkable and intimate record of a poet's achievement. The letters to Marie from Hollywood where Reznikoff did editorial work for Lewin (a successful film producer) resemble journal entries and are groundwork for some of his auto-

biographical poems. In one such letter to Marie he writes of an encounter with a rogue on a train platform, "He is jovial, uneasy, anxious to be friendly—an equal. He looks at me again and recognizes a Jew. I wonder what Hitler will do next, he asks friendly as ever. But there is an invention—airplanes that will fly without motors—it will stop him. I know a man paroled from the pen who invented it. Yes, I do not doubt he knows many men paroled from the pen and some who are not."

There are few mentions of his literary acquaintances. Even Zukofsky appears infrequently, more as a buddy than a colleague. One's respect for Reznikoff grows in reading these letters; he knew what was important to him, the literary game was not. Even in Hollywood, among money, beauty, and reflected glory he remains low-key. "I am not a social being," he writes dourly to Marie, and confesses his preference for a Manhattan diner over the pomp of LA. He meticulously records to her his own writing work he is completing but doesn't dwell on the wage he needs to earn or the financial rewards that do not materialize with any of the books he steadily produces.

The letters will disappoint those looking for "Objectivists" insight and anecdotes, the group name of poets Reznikoff is inextricably wed to and to whom Reznikoff refers in one of his letters simply as "a group." But admirers of Reznikoff's poetry should be quite pleased with this collection. He once said poetry uses things to express emotion and should be precise about the thing, reticent about the emotion. Not so in his letters. The early letters to his wife are an outpouring of emotion—his devotion to her, his easily incited jealousy of other men near her, his desire for her. It's a testament to his discipline as a poet to see the same love and compassion so skillfully rendered in his poems find a more intimate expression in his personal letters.

It is a compliment to the sincerity of the poems.

DANIEL BOUCHARD

MARY BURGER
Bleeding Optimist
Xurban Press (available through Small Press Distribution), 1996, 91 pages.

Though "writing as representation" is ***** I admit I feel compelled to tell what happened.

--**Bleeding Optimist**, page 41

To tell what "happened."

From Webster's dictionary:

happen - 1) to occur by chance; 2) to come into being as an event, process, or result.

happening - 1) something that happens; 2) an event or series of events designed to evoke a spontaneous reaction to sensory, emotional, or spiritual stimuli.

In **Bleeding Optimist**—a 92-page self-declared work of "fractious prose" complete with internal organs on every other page—Mary Burger presents us with a "happening," a series of fractured and fragmented writing events designed to provoke our reactions—spontaneous or sardonic, defensive or devastated—to a similarly fractured and fragmented series of reported (real-life?) events. Against the public backdrop of the O.J. Simpson trial, Oklahoma City bombing, social anarchy, and desperate individuals exposing their desperation on the local news, Burger eavesdrops on the private spectacle of her own life and reveals just enough to piece together a story.

** "I'm just bored" doesn't elicit sympathy. But if you drink to fix it, watch them call you weak. Not whining. The resolution between bored drunk and bored to death.



mouth almighty records

"THE POETS' LABEL"

William Burroughs*
Maggie Estep
Flippin the Script: Rap Meets Poetry
Allen Ginsberg
Grand Slam! Best of the National Slam
Bob Holman*
Timothy Leary
The New Yorker Out Loud
Edgar Allan Poe
The Last Poets
Michele Serros
Beau Sia*
Terry Southern*
Sister Spit
Sekou Sundiata
Wammo
Emily XYZ*

*'98 Releases

to order: 1-800-992-9673

and presenting:

Mouth Almighty Mondays at Fez
Slam at 7, Feature at 9
check PoCal listings for details

"Bringing the Muse to Market"

-Eavan Boland



© 1998 Mercury Records <http://www.mouthalmighty.com>

I liked him, I guess.
He didn't have many requirements. **

This lean, minimalist prose, which always seems to be just breaking the silence no matter how much has been said, burns us out of our tidy assumptions about sympathy, romance, and irony, leaving us somewhat battered and bloodshot. However, Burger is no slick ironist—though she delivers hard-edged lines like "Can you talk to someone who's numb from the neck up," she never uses sarcasm to duck from the facts of a situation. On the contrary, she confronts the world head on, with the defiance of someone who picks up broken glass because no one else will.

** Plaster fell off in sheets. Fifty counts of attempted murder. Or 150. Or 1000. Or not—Not everyone was home. Is it attempted murder if you thought someone was there? **

Whether or not it matters is a question that persists throughout the book. A failed love affair compels the narrator to "tell what happened," but "does telling mean it really happened"? Webster's tells us that an event happens as "result," but Burger sets her tale in a universe where the principles of cause and effect have ceased to matter or make sense of reality. Add to this scenario the perpetual appearance and disappearance of a blank, anti-heroic lover whose evasions, lies, and smuggling activities betray us repeatedly, and we, like the narrator, are left with the raw, disquieting sensation of being alive, unequivocally alive and breathing, in a world that defies all belief.

** We've lost any interest we once had in finding out if he did it. Or what else he did, whether he did or didn't do this. **

Burger situates her story in the aftermath of narrative and narrative expectation. What happened, what happened after that, and why, are questions to which **Bleeding Optimist** promises no definite answers. What do matter are the spectacle and the experience of events which, despite philosophical doubts and speculations about the reality of occurrence and the realism of reportage, continue to happen around us all the time. Burger inhabits and incorporates this happening, which resembles more a (manmade?) phenomenon than an occurrence, more a space than an instant. In this context, she grapples with the timeless battles between intimacy and senselessness, hopefulness and injustice, between the "We" and "They" of the empty scoreboard that complements each half-empty page of text. What wins out in the end is a sort of standoff—a deadpan draw in which each contestant threatens to reveal the other's flaws and limitations.

Given the intense, personal nature of **Bleeding Optimist**, the term "confessional" might come to

mind. However, Burger's "confession" takes nothing for granted and harbors no delusions about its singularity or transcendence.

** These people really don't want to know. Imagine! How can they not be burning to hear my confessions? **

Burger challenges conventional notions that characterize the confession as an "event"—a temporal and temporary site for personal transformation. Her admissions of self and self-revelation cannot be confined to the limits of ordinary or extraordinary events; rather, they occur regularly and repeatedly as natural facts of existence. Nor does this "perpetual confession" attempt to overdramatize or wax sentimental about the narrator's personal details. True, the narrator remembers and renarrates episodes from her past, but "Not because they're memorable."

What lies at stake here is much more than mere sentiment or a broken heart. If Burger writes her way into personal confession, then her writing also confesses itself—admitting to its own devices, reframings, and ellipses. And if *Bleeding Optimist* is about the writing of *Bleeding Optimist*, then it is also about the rereading and rewriting of "the world"—i.e., a world in which journalistic and popular interpretations can transform events into large-scale political narratives. The public can in fact be made private. Just as she refuses to moralize about her own life, Burger refuses to accept any public event as being conclusive or bearing any clear-cut message.

** Everyone is shocked. Everyone is horrified. Everyone is angry. Everyone is grateful for their life. Or, everyone is sad at senseless tragedy.

That is, that American history is different from anyone else's. **

For Burger, history is not an

allegory, and life is not a learning experience. The simple answers are simply inadequate and, oftentimes, damaging to the truth. *Bleeding Optimist* strives for a new kind of truth-telling that neither undermines the complexities of multiple perspectives nor compromises the narrator's ambivalence towards her own experiences. And Burger is optimistic for the same reasons that she is ironic: despite the unlivableness of experience, she still stands in the middle of her own life; despite the seeming futility of language statements, she still has to say something.

PAMELA LU

STEPHEN MALMUDE
I Got To Know

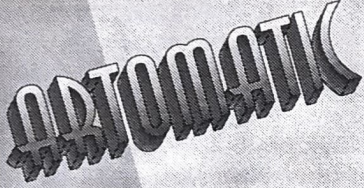
Goodbye Books (59 Old Briarcliff Road, Briarcliff, NY 10510-1106), 1997, 24 pages.

Stephen Malmude presents a collection rarely—his others are *Catting* (1973) and *From Roses to Coal* (1981). He is a born New York person; his poems are close-to-the-vest-works, posed with distance, no wasted words, no sentimentalism, and with an implicit, city style self-revelation. His voice is self-consciously manly, but it's not as if he is balancing against the bathetic or effete; it's as if they are insidious. The poems have a tough and succinct appearance, mostly measured in 2-3 feet per line, and their coolness gives the impression of something hot—part heart, part wit, part Euro-Jewish awareness—that is tempered for the purpose of survival.


From "Faunal Remains":

As
reverie
plus
moves me

away
from
the early
dream



INTERNET ACCESS
for



Watcha get:
Unlimited access, Email, FTP, Telnet, Gopher, CGI script libraries, 5MB on web server for your personal web site, Usenet news groups and
Friendly Service and Support

Watcha don't get:
Busy signals

<http://www.artomatic.com>
212.206.0015

toward
water
goal
of the animals

men
fall
into
a pool

after
being
faked into
the air

This laconic effect, along with a reliance on the masculine quatrain, allow Malmude to work in and out of an implied narrative. Non sequitur and visual observation weave into the suggestion of event; everything is personal and, to some extent, none of the reader's business. He is able to be poetic on occasion, and he does so without being emphatic in the least. His shop talk comes from where tools are kept, or coffee gets drunk. His non-literary bent is

convincing and natural. In a rare confiding moment, in "Once I Expressed": "at the first note/of character/I was not floated/by art any more." Dashes of Borscht Belt humor and workingman puns undercut whatever could lead into the pretty, and secure the voice. Art comes to the poet, not he to it.

The collection concludes with several poems written in longer measures and at greater length. No tricks, and the posture is private. The long concluding poem, "The Pastures," is a quiet masterpiece of nostalgia and place, breadth and resignation. Here vulnerability is not grudging, beauty is allowed, showing the wear that Malmude appreciates in it.

JOHN GODFREY



photo by Teresa Hinze

HEATHER FULLER
perhaps this is a rescue fantasy

Edge Books (PO Box 254642
Washington, DC 20007), 1997, 72
pages, \$10.00.

The apartment building of poetry

has many rooms. Here voices are heard through paper-thin walls and native genius and pickpockets take their address. Outside, squatters stake out spaces thought uninhabitable. Here we're up on each other's gossip, though we sometimes act like strangers. From the "Y" women's group to Street corner, from the pent-house Academy to nuts and bolts Experimentalist suite—something's going on in the in here, out-there-hard-to-locate, hard-to-ignore state of American poetry.

Edge Press is locating one vector of our organically diverse moment by publishing writers cued to what poet Kathleen Fraser calls, "This language we come up against." In **perhaps this is a rescue fantasy**, Heather Fuller pushes the reader to make subliminal connections between her disjunctive brain scenes and our own mind space. In "The Delicate Art of the Rifle," she writes:

We are modeling disagreement
that doesn't end in violence.

A dominant trope in much of **rescue fantasy** is to place the reader as the speaker. Mid-poem Fuller writes, "Would this be your poem I don't presume to narrate." The reader becomes both participant and witness in a narrative-of-the-undoing. The poem ends:

In the city of 3 a.m. sirens I've left
something undone.
Someone murmured *mustard* and

my collar would not reach.

Do I look as if I need a taxi

Fuller shares poetic concerns with writers like Charles Bernstein and Susan Howe, though with a touch that is very much her own. Here poetry is a proposition to possibilities generating meaning-producing moments—ones that sometimes push the reader to surprise or perplexion. In the poem "Darkroom" half-articulated gestures come into view and flicker elsewhere:

From a train a child questions zoo wall
later explained as sound barrier

By the road a sort of stutter

The cover art work offers a mechanical ink diagram, perhaps culled from the **Anarchist Cookbook**, of a book bomb. The ingredients: sheet explosive, electric blasting cap, no. 912 batteries, mercury element, tape and shrapnel are innocently lined up with an arrow pointing to a carved out book. The unassuming and crudely-kitsch diagram leave the book-as-possible-explosive open in all the right ways. Fittingly, the artist is unknown.

In "Between Here and Else," Fuller supplies a moment that flirts with a pun-metaphor making its moves by, for, and on desire:

When she finds you tightening
wire at the circus you are certain
you've seen her hands in cement in
every corner of town. She opens
the bag on her back and you tell her
you are collecting
those.

Fuller is the after-Language's Eileen Myles. Her **rescue fantasy** is often unapologetically demanding as well as experimentally acute. And while all night, gender, politics and cars slip in and out of poetry's parking lot, we may hazard it is Heather Fuller.

TOM DEVANY

St.
Mark's
Book
shop

31 THIRD AVENUE
NEW YORK, NEW YORK
10003
PHONE
(212) 260 7853

EDWIN TORRES
SandHommeNomadNo

SandHommeNomadNo Press (120 Christopher St.
New York, NY 10014-4284), 1997.

The publication of Edwin Torres' third chapbook, **SandHommeNomadNo**, solves the logarithm of where we are now, poetry-wise, or at least adds a few digits to the end of pi (po?) as formerly known.

The posterboy of the Nu Poetry Move of the early 90s—that was his goateed physiognomy gracing **New York** magazine cover and **Newsweek** story—Torres is known primarily as a Performer whose madcap stage antics include costume / vocal / "character" changes, tapes played on beat-up tinny cassette recorders dragged across the floor, musical saw accompaniment, Khlebnikovian language play (his poem "Coil" in **SandHomme** is dedicated to K.), a spewing of Schwitters through newly-opened throat apertures (viz. his "Son Mi Son"), and a system of gestural language that often tilts the whole poem/performance axis into dance. In another life, like, his day job, Edwin does it in graphic design. **SandHommeNomadNo** takes on the quest of getting the supple into the page, making the old chewed tree gasp with life, utilizing a dense structure that allows you to see the hearing of the poem by never losing a word as it breaks and spins, plates twirling on a rod, world without end.

Some Facts on **SandHommeNomadNo**:

1. There is no Table of Contents. I count 16 poems, including the back cover (Edwin answers the so-called necessity of blurbification by posting the volume's most audaciously romantic poem there). There are sections that seem to be preambles, there are poems that emerge from other poems, there are switches in typeface and layout poem-to-poem and within poems. In other words, the book may be one long poem (performance) or not, and the Reader is at liberty. But the Reader **MUST** read with these intentions—where does this damn thing end? As Torres lulls you with his lilt and love (that lazy non-philosophy), he is actually piling on the density. It's a bubble bath where the bubbles pop open waterfalls, which then evaporate to more bubbles over and over. (Did I really say that?)

2. Torres puts a gauzy translucent page in the center of the book. Like the tissue paper welcome page in the mimeo books of the 70s, like Laurence Stern's misplaced marbled page in **Tristram Shandy**, the empty sheet adds an inside inside, a cover in the center. Read the beautiful "Whiteshirt Overmeadow" through the translucent page—be transported to Yorkshire, watch Edwin's poem-movie called "Cloudspotting."

3. There are six graphic illustrations (including cover) that punctuate **SandHommeNomadNo**. As the book begins to yield, these graphics become poems themselves. Yup. In Torresland, you can read the paintings.

4. Don't be fooled. The rueful romantic vocabu-

NEW FROM

TALISMAN HOUSE



Lyman Gilmore: DON'T TOUCH THE POET: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JOEL OPPENHEIMER

Don't Touch the Poet views the turbulent 1950s and 1960s through the life of poet Joel Oppenheimer, first director of the St. Mark's Poetry Project. A student under Charles Olson at Black Mountain College, Oppenheimer was one of the original "Black Mountain Poets" in Donald Allen's *New American Poetry*. Director of New York's Teachers and Writers Collaborative; organizing its "Writers in the Schools" project, he also wrote regular columns in the *Village Voice* on topics ranging from politics to sports and literature to the seasons. "A necessary book, and also a delightful one." —Hayden Carruth • *Don't Touch the Poet* gives Oppenheimer "his rightful place in American letters." —Andrei Codrescu • "Gilmore's telling biography [gives] solid legs to the importance of Joel's writing and a fascinating life well lived." —Ron Swoboda • 284 pp., photos; cloth, \$21.95, ISBN: 1-883689-64-3

Leslie Scalapino: THE RETURN OF PAINTING, THE PEARL, AND ORION: A TRILOGY: NEW EDITION

One of the most admired works of innovative American fiction • "A terrific book. Edges of meaning and relationship become here the intensive ground of their endlessly volatile statement. So that. As if. It were. Leslie Scalapino thinks the so-called world as real, and so it is, each instance. Each instance in place." —Robert Creeley • According to *MultiCultural Review*, "The book's great virtue is *claritas* . . . the intensity of the experience itself." • "What makes this writing go is an incredible ease," said the *Village Voice*. "A sense of a text that is capable of breathing." • "One of the most unique and powerful writers at the forefront of American literature." —*Library Journal* • 238 pp.; paper, \$16.95, ISBN: 1-883689-57-0.

William Bronk: LIFE SUPPORTS: NEW AND COLLECTED POEMS: NEW EDITION

"One of our modern masters." —*Michael Heller* • "He is brilliant." —*Southwest Review* • "A poet of great distinction." —*Small Press Review* • Acclaimed by *The Nation* as "our most significant poet," Bronk is the author of nearly two dozen celebrated books of poetry and a collection of prose works, *Vectors and Smoothable Curves* (new edition, Talisman: 1997), which is widely considered a landmark in contemporary literature. • Winner of the American Book Award, *Life Supports* has been greeted as one of the most significant literary works to appear in this country. • "An utterly compelling, harrowing and masterfully written body of poetry," said the *Los Angeles Times Book Review*. "Its publication is a major literary event." 252 pp.; paper, \$16.95, ISBN: 1-883689-59-7.

• Talisman books can be found in good bookstores everywhere and can be ordered from Small Press Distribution, 1347 Seventh St., Berkeley, CA 94710 (510-549-3336) and from LPC Group/InBook: >By phone (Visa/ MasterCard) 800-243-0138; >By fax (Visa/MasterCard) 800-334-3892; >Or by writing to: LPC Group/InBook, 1436 West Randolph St., Chicago, IL 60607.

• Talisman books are distributed to the trade by LPC Group/InBook; 1436 West Randolph St.; Chicago, IL 60607; Orders: 800-243-0138

• For a copy of our spring catalog or for subscriptions to our journal *Talisman*, please write to us at: Talisman House, Publishers, P.O. Box 3157, Jersey City, NJ 07303-3157.

THE DANSPACE PROJECT

Feb 5-7 Global Exchange: José Navas

Feb 13-15 City/Dans: Guta Hedewig & Nami Yamamoto

Feb 19-22 Janet Lilly & Friends

Feb 26-Mar 1 Global Exchange/Danza Libre: Jaime Ortega

Mar 5-8 City/Dans: Linda Austin

Mar 12-15 FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Mar 19-22 Global Exchange: Phillip Adams & Sue Healey

Reservations/Info.212-674-8194

St. Mark's Church in-the-Bowery
2nd Avenue & 10th Street

lary and surface sweet sentiments that glide across the taut structures of sound/gesture /image in **SandHommeNomadNo** will push consciousness to the break point.

You have been warned.

Love ahead. Proceed

With caution and you are dead.

5. Spanish and French dance through the beyonsense (as Paul Schmidt defined Khlebnikov's made-up language). Pound and Paz put in guest appearances.

6. It is exciting to just hold this fully-realized artifact. This will hold your breath until Kill Rock Stars releases Edwin's CD, **Holy Hip**, produced by Joran Trachtenberg this spring. **Hip** will do for the CD what **SandHommeNomadNo** has done for book.

Here is the book that speaks through text, graphics and poesie concret which become the equivalent of Torres's fully-orchestrated live performances. Here is the book that answers the recent **Village Voice** plaint that Torres hasn't Made It because he's still publishing his own chapbooks by squaring that tradition with Whitman and making a tremendous presentation that will only be mucked up when published by a major publisher. That will happen, and when it does, it will be something else, and that will be a great thing too. As for now—Torres rejoices in the contradictions that are poetry AND the world, and when we read close, look deep, and hear silence, as **SandHomme**

NomadNo insists on, we are present at the activating moment of creation. Torres knows that is sublime. This reviewer concurs. Now it's up to you.

BOB HOLMAN

KRISTIN PREVALLET

Perturbation, My Sister

First Intensity Press (PO Box 665, Lawrence, Kansas, 66044), 1997, 75 pages.

Inspired by Max Ernst's surreal collage novel **The Hundred Headless Woman**, Kristin Prevallet has artfully written a mysterious collage of paragraphs as remarkable for its sheer illustrative pleasure as its intensity of project.

In eloquent preface, Prevallet states: "This book is my attempt to read **the Hundred Headless Woman**." The immediate question is, of course, "Why Ernst?" Perhaps it is Breton's challenge that Ernst's book "avoids all parallels with other books..." Its collages make possible that which "spoken or written language cannot. [T]he **Hundred Headless Woman** will be preeminently the picture book of our day...such is our idea of progress that, on the eve of 1930, we are glad and impatient...for amazement." **Perturbation, My Sister** may or may not come to be the preeminent picture book of our day, but on the eve of 1998, morn 2000, it does preeminently ask and answer all kinds of questions about intertextuality and the social nature of writing.

For example, what kind of world would we inhabit if everyone had to write a book in order to read one? Perhaps one in which

The new body will exist upside down but perfectly

torqued airborne in vanilla sweat by an eggshell parachute, it's grisly-man aloft! Or could this new

world be built on

the perfect curve of a just broken neck

though Prevallet halfheartedly exercises cruelty for its own sake, it more often appears as an ingredient of her magnifying sensibility:

And yet I know that the bodies of lovers falling out of a moving vehicle will become one single stone, rather than hit the ground separately and risk the chance of not dying in each other's arms.

The tender passion of death in love is so good. New myths make it neat to see where her next flux will sprout. And when one reads

The rainbow split its colors into ignited logs

one knows she has a lotta hearth.

Such images are prevalent. Some of them surpass their source:

Had the eagle not arrived, would Prometheus not have ripped out his own heart?

I challenge anyone to say that non-verbally.

Prevallet was no doubt aware of Robert Duncan's and Jess Collins' **Caesar's Gate** and Carla Harryman's **Memory Play** own Ernst-inspired works. The network of influences she has written—or cut and pasted—herself into will inspire others. For she can move from the wonderfully smooth and violent to the girlish to the vulgar to the profound to the evaporatory in the space of one paragraph, evoking Bosch, Blake, Chris Marker, Nostradamus, and a proper Russell Edson. Perhaps Ernst was inspired by Locke's faculty of the imagination to bring things together that do not occur together in the world. Perhaps such processes are attenuative.

Perturbation, My Sister smartly argues against this:

The people of the ghost town were so devastated by the ruins of their buildings that they became like the window that abandons the house and joins the view.

As a collage artist, it is not surprising that she is concerned with the eye:

The eye of a skull is impenetrable, for in it the memory of all seen images is reduced to one circle.

How nice then, when the eye serves the ear:

for the eye is a fire that burns off disguise when combined with the fury of knives

And how nice it is to hear, to see,

for how else do we read and write? How do we read and write with each other? How do we read and write ourselves into the ongoing? How do we tackle (embrace) our predecessors and press (endow) our successors? Get in line? Enter the fray? Burst? How to be inspired and to inspire; how to expand upon and be expanded upon; these questions lead to and away from others, such as: why did Ernst's translator (his wife Dorothea Tanning) render "La femme 100 tetes" "The Hundred Headless Woman"?

To translate is to read another way. To read another way is to reread. To reread is to rewrite. To translate is to collaborate. Maybe this was Tanning's way of redreaming Ernst's "undreamlike toughness of muscle." Why not, when to write and read each other's dreams is to begin to realize them? With **Perturbation**,

THE
WORLD

53

Meena Alexander, Sherman Alexie
Amiri Baraka, Donna Brook
Jeffery Conway, Jordan Davis
Connie Deanovich, Joe Elliot
Elaine Equi, Foamola, Josephine Foot
Merry Fortune, Amy Gerstler
Carla Harryman, Richard Hell
David Henderson
Robert Hershon, Mitch Highfill
Patricia Spears Jones, Bill Luoma
Ange Mlinko, Eileen Myles
Wang Ping, Laurie Price, Tom Savage
Elio Schneeman, Sparrow
Lorenzo Thomas, Lynne Tillman
Paul Violi, Lewis Warsh

Payment of \$25 entitles readers to 4 issues of *The World*, distributed approximately twice a year. Single issues are available for \$7 each.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

Make check or money order payable to:
THE POETRY PROJECT
ST. MARK'S CHURCH
131 EAST 10TH ST. NY, NY, 10003

Writing Workshops at the Poetry Project

Experiments in Poetry Workshop taught by Bernadette Mayer (Tuesday evenings 7-9 PM; 10 weekly sessions, beginning February 17th)

Bernadette Mayer's Experiments in Poetry Workshops at the Poetry Project are legendary. A variety of writing methods are to be explored in connection with Mayer's ever-expanding lists of experiments, exercises, rehearsals, practices and intentions. This workshop will include in-class exercises while focusing on works from **The Greek Anthology**. Some sessions will include talks and presentations by special guests. Lecturers will include Ron Padgett, Montague Ullman, Jack Collom, Shulamith Lazarus, Peter Lamborn Wilson and John Giorno.

Bernadette Mayer is the author of numerous books of poetry and prose. Her recent books include **Sonnets, The Formal Field of Kissing, The Bernadette Mayer Reader, The Desires of Mothers to Please Others in Letters** and **Proper Name**. She has taught writing workshops at the Poetry Project since 1971.

Poetry Workshop taught by Tony Towle (Friday evenings 7-9 PM; 10 weekly sessions, beginning February 20th)

Participants will be encouraged to explore their own work individually, from the point of view of what is already there, as opposed to an idealization of what it should be. Non-binding assignments to expand poetic parameters will be suggested, and of course poetry in general, and a great deal else, will be discussed.

Tony Towle's most recent book is **Some Musical Episodes**, published by Hanging Loose Press, 1992. His book **North** was published as a Frank O'Hara Award book in 1970.

Mystery/Crime Fiction Writing Workshop taught by Charlotte Carter (Saturday afternoons, Noon-2 PM; 10 weekly sessions, beginning February 28th)

Participants will be guided in the plotting and writing of their individual projects, and take part in collaborative efforts. Emphasis will be on story, character, outlining, building suspense, and more. While accommodating a wide range of writing styles—from poetic to pulp—the goal will be to produce sellable crime fiction. There will be select readings and discussions of crime classics, such as Hammett, Himes, and Highsmith.

Charlotte Carter is the author of **Rhode Island Red** (Serpent's Tail, 1997) and the forthcoming **Coq au Vin** (Warner/Mysterious Press, 1999), written with mystery writer Frank King, who is the author of **Down and Dirty, Raya**, and more than 20 other novels.

Workshops cost \$150, which includes membership in The Poetry Project. This fee is good for one year and includes: the option of taking other workshops at no additional cost; free admission to most Poetry Project readings and events; and a subscription to The Poetry Project Newsletter. Reservations are required due to limited class space. Payment must accompany registration. Participants may register in person at the Project office or via mail (The Poetry Project, St. Mark's Church, 131 East 10th St., NYC 10003). For additional information please contact The Poetry Project at 212-674-0910.

My Sister Prevallet makes clear that dreams no longer have to be private and jokes can be as deadly as beauty. Dreamers take note: she gets that "real" dream quality:

A boy was dragging his classmates toward the old oak to hang them,

through dead-pan delivery:

The child who dares to let a living bird loose in the garden of plastic flowers immobile flying insects

Dragonflies!

Like Ernst—or any good surrealist—she takes us under water. In "I. Deeper," we see risen Atlantis microscopized. Then flotsam:

(The raft made of just severed limbs of shipwrecked sailors

will surely be devoured by sharks.)

That's a swell aphorism of hideous splendor and double futility. I saw them sleeved. It's the simple pleasure of experiencing a nightmare, though terrifying, and has massive noodnik appeal. **Perturbation, My Sister** tends to liberate the zoo, launching many birds, wolves, and monkeys in true surreal fashion. Prevallet's wolves, unlike her birds (some feathered with "the heavy plucking of a man's bleeding heart"), are not highly effective. Her monkeys however, if not better than Ernst's, are at least ten times as insidious:

(The violence of litter at the bottom of a river is a monkey ripping a cat apart from ears to tail...

I'm all for that (dog lover), but

where does it fit in the context of her project? An ecological punchline? The monkey in the corresponding collage by Ernst has a genuine expression of concern on her face and is attempting not to rip up but hold on to a cat in a world where everything blows away. It is the rebus that answers the riddle of the accompanying text: "Ask this monkey: who is the hundred headless woman? In the style of Church Fathers he will answer: It's enough for me to see the hundred headless woman to know. It's enough for you to demand an explanation, not to know." We can admire Prevallet's monkey for her directness: there's more than one way to write a book.

LOREN GOODMAN

New Books from Hanging Loose Press

Morton Marcus

When People Could Fly

Prose poems from the master of the form. "Eloquent... the poems are entertaining, sobering, and above all, wise." —Shirley Kaufman. "Gets to the Light by tearing up the universe in ecstatic dance" —Andrei Codrescu.

Paper, \$13. Cloth, \$21.

Barbara Ann Porte

He's Sorry, She's Sorry, They're Sorry, Too

Short stories that are at home in both the mythic and workaday worlds. "Remarkable in scope... a brave and impressive collection" —Ha Jin. "Genuine vision and a genuine heart" —Hilma Wolitzer. "Lively... full of imaginative sparks" —Maxine Chernoff

Paper, \$13. Cloth, \$21.

Hanging Loose Magazine #71 — Sherman Alexie, D. Nurkse, Paul Violi, Joanna Fuhrman, Ron Overton, John Gill, Kathleen Wiegner, Hayan Charara, Marc Cohen, Victor Contoski, many others. \$7.

Hettie Jones

Drive

First full collection of poems by the author of *How I Became Hettie Jones*. "She flies with language, and there's an unleaded heart in her tank" — Lawrence Ferlinghetti. "A strong singer... I love her poems" — Marie Ponsot.

Paper, \$12. Cloth, \$20.

Dick Lourie

Ghost Radio

His first book in 20 years, many of the poems centered on making music. "Speaks with a unique and convincing eloquence" —Denise Levertov.

"Sudden, dramatic snapshots of true feeling" —Alison Lurie.

"A delicious blend" —Lewis Hyde.

Paper, \$12. Cloth, \$20.

Charles North

No Other Way: Selected Prose

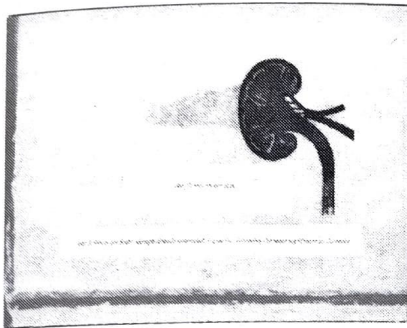
Incisive essays on poetry and art by a well-known New York poet, HL's first non-fiction book.

William Corbett praises North's "generosity of spirit and an intelligence that never outsmarts its subject but is there to serve it.... This is a wonderful book."

Paper, \$12. Cloth, \$20.

Order from: Hanging Loose Press, 231 Wyckoff St., #1D, Brooklyn, NY 11217. Enclose a check or money order. Include \$2.00 postage for first two titles, 60¢ each added title. **Enclose this ad and deduct \$1 for each book ordered!**

KELSEY ST. PRESS



ENDOCRINOLOGY

MEI-MEI BERSENBRUGGE, poem KIKI SMITH, art

In this collaborative work, the immaterial is examined in physical and mental sensations taken back to their material source in the endocrine system. These poems continue Berssenbrugge's brilliant explorations of language and perception in light of changes in the body's chemistry.

The human body--its interior and exterior organizations (tissues), functions and surfaces--has been Kiki Smith's artistic subject for many years.

36 pages, offset, paperback, alk. paper, 20 lithographs, \$17, ISBN 0-932716-41-5
Limited signed edition with a Sugarlift Color Etching on Kitakata paper, \$142,
ISBN 0-932716-42-3

THE FOUR YEAR OLD GIRL

MEI-MEI BERSENBRUGGE, poetry, RICHARD TUTTLE, art

In this extraordinary new volume by Mei-mei Berssenbrugge, the reader must accept poetry as a profound act of rearrangement of human presence in the phenomenal world. Berssenbrugge assigns all sensations value—the physical responses by which we experience moisture, a horizon, a man, a woman, love, suffering, a child, a piece of quartz. Written lines, like strings of protein, are agencies of healing which also destroy matter. The long lines hover between composition and decomposition.

Poems, 1998, 74pp., alk. paper, paperback, \$12 ISBN: 0-932716-44-X Limited Signed Edition ISBN: 0-932716-46-6

BLACK BOX CUTAWAY SUSAN GEVIRTZ, poetry

An important work by a writer who has devoted her career to looking in new ways at traditional categories and disciplines. Here, Gevirtz cuts away the box through which one looks to frame any set of values or work of art. The poem cuts away from itself to other views—those of films, TV newscasts, personal memories. It comes back then to itself as an instrument of refocusing and reframing. The book as a whole offers a disciplined restatement of uncertainty in our time, in the face of multiple views and mass numbers.

Poems, Spring, 1998, 64pp., alk. paper, paperback, \$10 ISBN: 0-932716-47-4

REBECCA LETTERS LAYNIE BROWNE, prose-poems

"These prose-poems read like radiant pastiches of the (imaginary?) letters of Rebecca Browne, whose 1898 photo appears on the cover.... Either way, the effect is an uncanny blend of grammar and history."

—Publishers Weekly

80pp., offset, \$10, ISBN 0-932716-43-1

THE WOMAN WITHOUT EXPERIENCES

PATRICIA DIENSTFREY, prose/poetry

"I urge those who find the current pre-fab state of American fictions deplorable, with its condescending and cynical formulations, to read Patricia Dienstfrey's The Woman Without Experiences.."

—CAROLE MASO, The Women's Review of Books

WINNER OF THE AMERICA AWARD FOR LITERATURE

144pp., \$12, ISBN 0-932716-37-7

KELSEY ST. PRESS

email: kelseyst@sirius.com • web site: <http://www.sirius.com/~kelseyst/>
P. O. Box 9235, Berkeley, CA 94709, Ph 510-845-2260, Fax 510-548-9185

books received.

IVAN ARGUELLES AND JACK FOLEY

Dead/Requiem

Pantograph Press (PO Box 9643, Berkeley, California 94709), 1997, 127 pages, \$9.95.

ANSELM BERRIGAN

They Beat Me Over the Head with a Sack

Edge Books (PO Box 25642, Washington, DC 20007), 1998, 42 pages, \$5.00.

WILLIAM BRONK

Life Supports: New and Collected Poems

Talisman House (Jersey City, NJ), 1997, 241 pages.

JAMES BROUGHTON

Packing Up For Paradise

Black Sparrow Press (Santa Rosa, California), 1997, 331 pages, \$16.00.

PHILIP DACEY

What's Empty Weighs the Most

Black Dirt Press (Elgin Community College, 1700 Spartan Drive, Elgin, IL 60123-7193), 30 pages, \$5.00.

EDWARD DORN

High West Rendezvous: A Sampler

etruscan books (24a Fore Street, Buckfastleigh, South Devonshire TQ11 OAA), 1997, 60 pages.

WILLIAM EVERSON

Collected Poems, Volume I

The Residual Years: Poems 1943-1948

Black Sparrow Press (Santa Rosa, California), 1997, 382 pages, \$17.50.

LUISA FUTORANSKY

The Duration of the Voyage

Translated by Jason Weiss, Junction Press (San Diego), 1997, 95 pages, \$11.00.

MICHAEL GIZZI

No Both

Hard Press (West Stockbridge, MA), 1997, 115 pages, \$12.00.

WILLIAM HEYEN

Pig Notes & Dumb Music: Prose on Poetry

BOA Editions Limited (260 East Avenue, Rochester, New York 14604), 1997, 189 pages, \$11.95.

YUNTE HUANGE

Shi: A Radical Reading of Chinese Poetry

Roof Books (303 East 8th Street, New York, NY 10009), 76 pages, \$9.95.

MAURICE KENNY

Backward to Forward

White Pine Press (10 Village Square,

Fredonia, New York 14063), 1997, 170 pages, \$14.00.

MORTON MARCUS

When People Could Fly

Hanging Loose Press (231 Wyckoff Street, Brooklyn, NY 11217), 1997, 128 pages, \$13.00.

CHARLIE MEHRHOFF

complete w/ tongue

Epictetus Press (PO Box 23317, Seattle, Washington 98102), 1997, 140 pages, \$12.00.

VADIM MESYATS

A Guest in the Homeland: Selected Writings

Talisman House (Jersey City, New Jersey), 1997, 82 pages, \$10.50.

PAUL METCALF

Collected Works: Volume 3

Coffee House Press (Minneapolis), 1997, 524 pages, \$35.00.

JANINE POMMY VEGA

Tracking the Serpent: Journeys to Four Continents

City Lights Books (San Francisco), 1997, 192 pages, \$12.95.

CARL RAKOSI

The Earth Suite

etruscan books (24a Fore Street, Buckfastleigh, South Devonshire TQ11 OAA), 1997, 63 pages.

TOMAZ SALAMUN

The Four Questions of Melancholy

White Pine Press (Fredonia, New York), 1997, 265 pages, \$15.00.

LESLIE SCALAPINO

The Return of Painting, The Pearl, And Orion

Talisman House, 1997, 230 pages, \$16.95.

FRANK SHEEHAN

The Enlightened Spirit

Poetry Center Press (3 Monte Vista Road, Orinda, CA 94563), 1997, 19 pages.

DALE SMITH

Sillycon Valley

Gas Edition #5 (Palo Alto, CA), 1997, 38 pages, \$5.00.

STEPHEN STEPANCHEV

Seven Horizons

Orchises (PO Box 20602, Alexandria, Virginia 22320-1602), 1997, 80 pages, \$12.95.

STEPHANIE STRICKLAND

True North

University of Notre Dame Press (Notre Dame, Indiana 46556), 1997, 85 pages, \$12.00.

Sunflowers & Locomotives: Songs for Allen

Nada Press (Grandville, Michigan), 1997, 58 pages.

LYNNE TILLMAN

The Broad Picture

Serpent's Tail (London), 1997, 175 pages, \$16.00.

CHARLES TOMLINSON

Selected Poems

New Directions (New York), 1997, 225 pages, \$13.95.

KEITH WALDROP

Analogies of Escape

Burning Deck Press (71 Elmgrove Avenue, Providence, RI 02906), 1997, 80 pages, \$10.

KEITH WALDROP

Stone Angels

Instress (PO Box 3124, Saratoga, California, 95070), 1997, 22 pages.

KEITH WALDROP

The Resemblance Begins

Instress (PO Box 3124, Saratoga, California, 95070), 1997, 22 pages.

BELLE WARING

Dark Blonde

Sarabande Books (Louisville, Kentucky), 1997, 74 pages, \$12.95.

SHANNON WELCH

Transients

Instress (PO Box 3124, Saratoga, California, 95070), 1997, 22 pages.

TREVOR WINKFIELD

Pageant

Hard Press (West Stockbridge, MA), 1997, 48 pages.

ARAKI YASUSADA

Double Flowering

Roof Books (303 East 8th Street, NY, NY 10009), 1997, 168 pages, \$14.95.

ZHANG ER

winter garden

Goats and Compasses (Brownsville, Vermont), 1997, 20 pages, \$8.00.

IVAN ZHDANOV

The Inconvertible Sky

Talisman House (Jersey City, New Jersey), translated by John High and Patrick Henry, 1997, 55 pages, \$8.95.

Magazines

- Agni #46**
Boston, MA, 1997, 240 pages, \$8.95.
- Calyx**
Volume 17, Number 2, 1997, 128 pages,
\$9.50.
- Explosive #3**
Iowa City, Iowa, 1997, 88 pages, \$5.00.
- Gare du Nord #1**
Paris, 1997, 40 pages.
- The Germ #1**
Santa Cruz, CA, Fall 1997, 221 pages,
\$6.00.
- Mirage #4/Period(ical) #71-74**
San Francisco, CA, October-December
1997, \$3.00.
- New Blind Date #1**
November 1997, Berkeley, CA, 14 pages.
- Washington Review**
December/January 1997-98, 22 pages,
\$2.50.

Now in print!

Reading at the Poetry Project



Flyers by Joe Brainard

Reading at the Poetry Project: Flyers by Joe Brainard
A folio of 11 classic Brainard flyers and one full-length comic strip, with a special introduction by Bill Berkson. Printed in an limited edition of 250. 8 1/2 x 11 inches. Available from the Poetry Project. \$14.95.

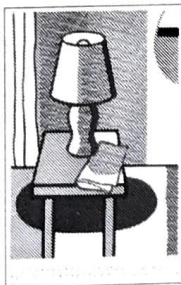
ART from the Poetry Project

POSTERS
AND
EDITIONS



Edwin, Alex Katz, 1997
One-color silkscreen, 37 x 23 3/4 inches, signed edition of 100: \$125.

Notebook Torn in Half, Claes Oldenburg, 1997
Three-color lithograph on handmade Saint Armand Special Etching paper,
25 1/2 x 22 1/2 inches, signed edition of 97: \$1,200.



Poetry of Everyday Life, Roy Lichtenstein, 1988
Three-color silkscreen, 43 x 30 inches, signed edition of 200: \$1,200.



Poetry for the Next Society,
Francesco Clemente/
Allen Ginsberg, 1989
Four-color offset lithograph, 22 x 39 inches,
signed edition of 500: \$250.



Poster,
Richard Tuttle/Mei-mei
Berssenbrugge, 1991
Fifteen-color litho/screen,
14 3/4 x 38 3/4 inches,
signed edition of 250: \$750



Poetry for the Next Society,
Kim MacConnel, 1990
Five-color silkscreen,
27 x 29 1/2 inches,
signed edition of 75: \$375
Five-color screenprint,
30 x 29 1/2 inches, edition of 125: \$75.

Available from:

Brooke Alexander Editions
59 Wooster Street
New York, NY 10012
tel. 212/925-4338
fax 941-9565

MEMBERSHIP FORM

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

\$50 \$75 \$100 \$250 \$500 \$1000

No, I do not wish to join at this time but here is my contribution of \$_____. (For your gift of \$20 or more you'll receive a year's subscription to *The Poetry Project Newsletter*.)

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY STATE ZIP _____

NOTE: If your gift is \$100 or more, you will also receive a FREE subscription to *The World*, The Poetry Project's literary magazine.

Please make all checks payable to The Poetry Project. Detach here and mail to the Poetry Project, c/o St. Mark's Church, 131 East 10th Street, New York, NY 10003.

New and Recently Renewed Members:

Lynda Abdo, Sheila Alson, Ruth Altmann, Naomi Antonakos, Mary Barnet, Charles Bernstein & Susan Bee, Rachele Bijou, Jean T. Bleich, Louise Bourgeois, Noah Brischel, L.D. Brodtkin, Steve Clay, Michelle T. Clinton, E.G. DeBonis, Maggie Estep, Richard Foreman & Kate Manheim, Edward Foster, Clara Freeman, Michael Friedman, Myrna M. Friedman, Soichi Furuta, Cliff Fyman, Joshua Galef, Anne M. Galicich, Audrey Geyer, Morris Golde, Leonard Goldstein, Michael Gottlieb, Gerard Grav, Tim Griffin, Esther Haynes, BobLynda Abdo, Sheila Alson, Ruth Altmann, Naomi Antonakos, Mary Barnet, Charles Bernstein & Susan BeLynda Abdo, Sheila Alson, Ruth Altmann, Naomi Antonakos, Mary Barnet, Charles Bernstein & Susan Bee, Rachele Bijou, Jean T. Bleich, Louise Bourgeois, Noah Brischel, L.D. Brodtkin, Steve Clay, Michelle T. Clinton, E.G. DeBonis, Maggie Estep, Richard Foreman & Kate Manheim, Edward Foster, Clara Freeman, Michael Friedman, Myrna M. Friedman, Soichi Furuta, Cliff Fyman, Joshua Galef, Anne M. Galicich, Audrey Geyer, Morris Golde, Leonard Goldstein, Michael Gottlieb, Gerard Grav, Tim Griffin, Esther Haynes, Bob Holman & Elizabeth Murray, Richard Holowka, Penelope Karageorge, Eliot Katz, A.A. Keating, Kim Kinder, Alice Kirn, Jane Kitselman, Daniel Krakauer, Annette Kraus, Kathy Kremins, T. Lanigan, Robert Lawrence, Annabel Lee, Gary Lenhart and Louise Hamlin, Noah Phyllis Levin, Lilla Lyon, John Martin & Michelle Filshie, Harry and Marie Mathews, Gillian McCain, in memory of Rebecca Cheney McGreevy, John Molinari, William J. Murphy, Marc Nasdor, Minerva Neiditz, Charles and Paula North, Gary H. Pachelo, Phil Padwe, Hank Paper, Robert Parkin, Louis Patler, Donna Perry, N.S. Prasad, Elena Prentice & Summer Rulon-Miller, Faye Rapaport, Sally Rhoades, Thomas Rockwell, Clare & Allen Rosenfeld, Michael Ruby, Sarita Sahni, Paul D. Salzberg, M.D., Robert J. Savino, Noam Scheindlin, Paul Schmidt, Steve Schrader, Myra Shapiro, Marianne Sheehan, Christy Sheffield Sanford, Christine Shook, Danny Shot, Sharon M. Silber, Ph.D., Tim Slavin, Richard H. Smith, Horace H. Solomon, Andre Spears, Ken J. Stec, Bill Sullivan, Kenny Tarbous, Janine Van Patten, Margo Viscusi, Kim Wainwright, and Jacob Ward. Thanks also to those members who made special Holiday contributions (as of 1/4/98): Paul Auster & Siri Hustuedt, Dianne and Irving Benson, Rudy Burckhardt & Yvonne Jacquette, Jeffery Conway, Rosemary Carroll, Georgia and Bill Delano, Alan Finkel, Soichi Furuta, Morris Golde, Anselm Hollo and Jane Dalrymple-Hollo, Jane Kitselman, Jerome & Lois E. Lowenstein, Gillian McCain, Elinor Nauen & Johnny Stanton, Charles and Paula North, Herschel Silverman, Robert J. Savino, Beth Broome, Henry & Carol Hicks, Chas P. McGreevy and Margery Reyman.

Your Gift Entitles You to These Membership Benefits:

Participating Member {\$50} FREE admission for a year to all regularly scheduled Poetry Project events! The opportunity to take writing workshops with renowned writers. PLUS discounts on admission to special events. PLUS a year's subscription to *The Poetry Project Newsletter*.

Supporting Member {\$75} FREE admission for a year for you and a guest to all regularly scheduled Poetry Project events. PLUS all the \$50 membership benefits.

Sustaining Member {\$100} all of the \$75 membership benefits. PLUS a FREE subscription to *The World*, the Poetry Project's literary magazine.

Sponsoring Member {\$250} FREE admission for a year for two to all Poetry Project events, including the annual New Year's Day Marathon Reading featuring over 100 poets and performers. PLUS a FREE subscription to *The World*. PLUS a signed 4-color poster-collaboration by internationally acclaimed artist Francesco Clemente and the late Allen Ginsberg.

Benefactor {\$500} FREE admission for a year for yourself and two others to all Poetry Project events PLUS a subscription to the *The World* and grateful public acknowledgement.

Patron {\$1000} All of the \$500 membership benefits and all 1996-1997 Poetry Project publications.

The Poetry Project
St. Mark's Church in-the-Bowery
131 East 10th Street
New York, New York 10003

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

HARRIS SCHIFF
790 PRESIDENT ST., 4L
BROOKLYN, N 11215

DATED MATERIAL: PLEASE RUSH
Address Correction Requested
Return Postage Guaranteed