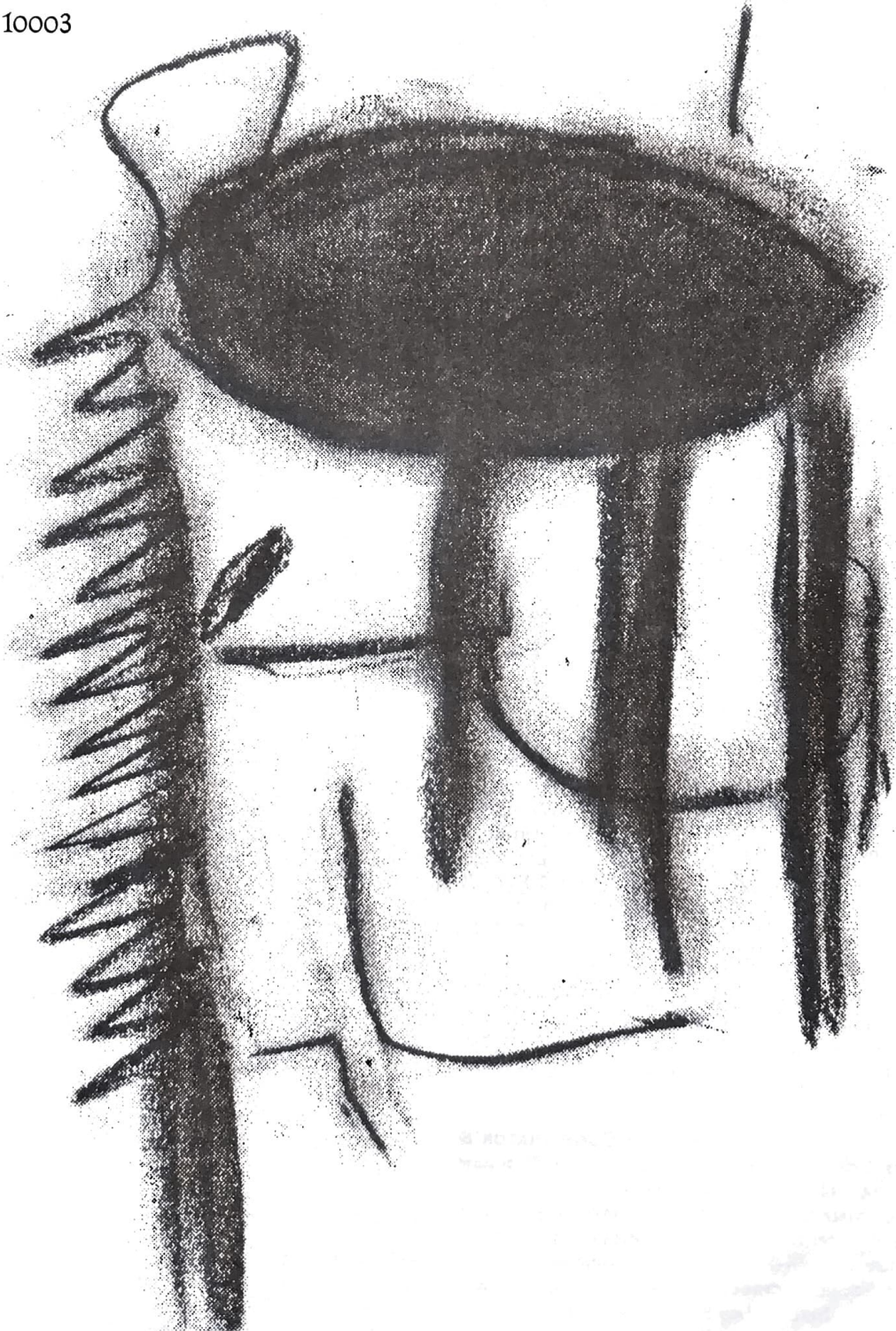


# the poetry project newsletter

April/May 1996

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St. Mark's Church in the Bowery  
131 East 10th St.  
New York, NY 10003

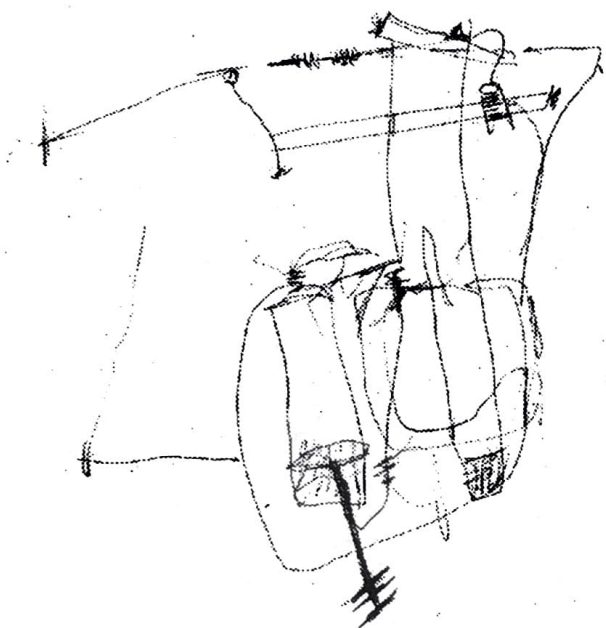


**WHAT'S INSIDE:** Remembrances of Larry Eigner, Bob Flanagan & Patricia Landrum • Poetry by Brenda Coultas, Melanie Neilson, Cliff Fyman, Laynie Browne, Bruce Andrews, Donna Cartelli & Alan Davies • What You Are Reading • Reviews of Kenneth Koch, Harryette Mullen, Poems for the Millennium, Robert Kelly & others.



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CARBUCKLE



Richard O'Russa is a poet, painter, co-printer of **Monster Trucks**. He is putting together a book of drawings and text on baseball.

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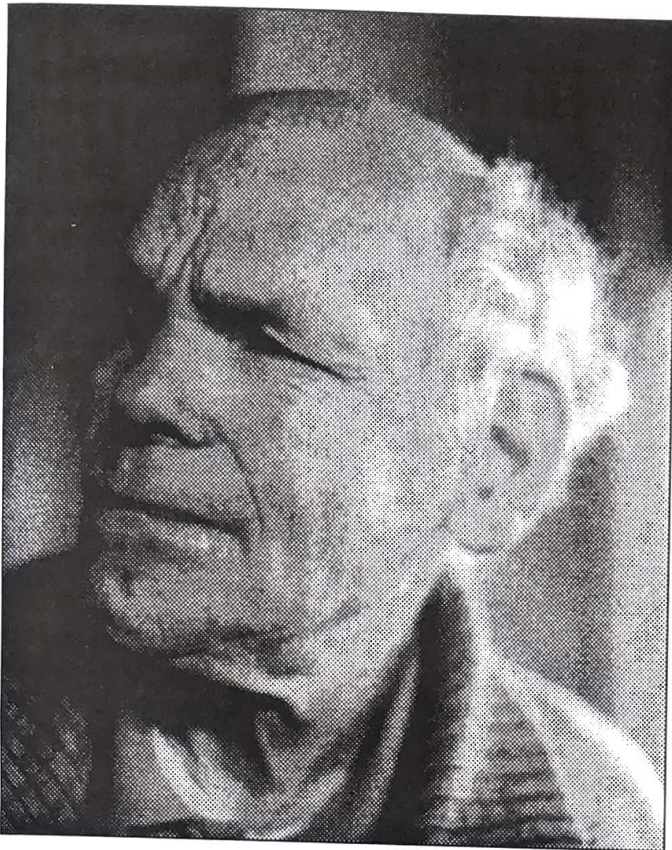
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## LARRY EIGNER 1928 - 1996

This February 3, Larry Eigner died in Berkeley. He was 68 years old.

A lifelong student of *the drunk swagger of human affairs*, he has been our grandest poet of human ecology for over 40 years, a writer who confounds the frail distinction between man-made and natural with charm and imagination. Animal, vegetable, and mineral all excited his mind. His nature included both bird and wire, dinosaurs and distant stars. For Eigner, poverty disturbs our ecology no less than toxic waste. Ten years ago, responding to a questionnaire, he wrote:

*what kps me interested (overload or not)? Ears and eyes, I guess. Being alive...*

*If life on other planets were feasible and known enough!!  
Wow!!*

Eigner's work has been important for several generations of writers, beginning with the Black Mountain Poets of the 1950's. His first book, **From the Sustaining Air**, was brought out in 1953 by Robert Creeley, eliciting a quick cheer from William Carlos Williams. A large collection followed from Jonathan Williams in 1960, **On My Eyes**, prefaced with a note by Denise Levertov. Also in 1960 **The New American Poetry** appeared, with Eigner grouped in the opening section, alongside Olson, Duncan, Creeley, Blackburn and Levertov. In the years since, Eigner has published more than

50 books, and appeared in more than 150 magazines.

The gestural clarity of Eigner's poems — their verbal modesty and perceptual acuity, their signature shape and utilitarian use of typewriter and page — are utterly without precedent. Superficially they resemble the staggered stanzas of Williams and Marianne Moore, the acrobatics of Cummings, the random spill of Mallarme. But Eigner's achievement is less a matter of formal innovation than an attitude about life. Eigner took Modernism's hard-won freedom from mechanical reiteration of shape and sound to a necessary conclusion in the freedom to follow his mind wherever it might go, however near or far. Poetry hasn't looked the same since.

Eigner was born with cerebral palsy, a condition induced by medical incompetence. *The doctor, mother says, apologized for not measuring her right. If he had, she's said, I would have been delivered in the Cesarean way. The doctor told my folks they could sue him for malpractice, but considering the thing an accident or something they didn't, anyhow they let it go.* Cryosurgery at age 35 freed him from the uncontrollable wildness of his left side. Before then, notes Eigner, *in order to relax at all I had to keep my attention partly away from myself, had to seek a home, coziness in the world.* Writing became the focus of this outwardly turning attention:

*memory*

*the sky more open*

*and clouds passing*

*because of the dead*

*tree there was*

*in close to the eaves*

*and the hours they took*

*to cut it down*

In 1986, Ron Silliman dedicated to Eigner **In the American Tree**, an anthology of Language writing. Eigner's response is characteristic:

*Hm, maybe this 'language' poetry is centered on thinking — the descendant or else the parent of speech? — rather than speech itself. Putting it up my alley. Thinking that gets man from one thing to the next. And realization, recognition or real awareness of things, may not be a different kettle of fish, much.*

I'm not sure how many poems Eigner wrote. My guess is near 3000 — best represented in four big Black Sparrow Press books, **Things Stirring Together or Far Away** (1974), **The World and Its Streets, Places** (1977), **Waters Places a Time** (1983), and **Windows Walls Yards Ways** (1994). The last two were edited by Larry's longtime friend Robert Grenier. A book of fiction was brought out in 1978 from This Press, **Country Harbor Quiet Act Around**. In 1989, Roof Books published a collection of Eigner's criticism, **Areas Lights Heights**. A new book of poems is due momentarily from Sun & Moon.

—Ben Friedlander







# BOB FLANAGAN 1953 - 1996

Los Angeles writer, visual artist and performer Bob Flanagan died on January 4, 1996, shortly after his 43rd birthday. Bob succumbed to cystic fibrosis, an inherited disease that affects the respiratory system and pancreas. His illness both plagued and motivated him throughout his too short but extraordinarily productive life. Doctors gave him little chance of survival past age 6 or 7, but Bob consistently exceeded everyone's expectations. The difficulties of being sick became the backbone of his work and masochism. He dealt with the latter extensively in his writing and art. At his bedside was Bob's long time partner, artistic collaborator and dominatrix, Sheree Rose.

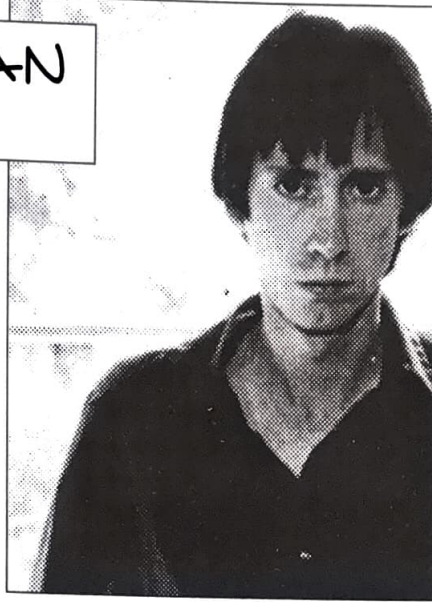
Bob Flanagan's books of poetry and prose are all currently out of print, but a publisher is being sought for a new work, his **Pain Journal**, which he was completing at the time of his death, and for a Bob Flanagan reader, which would be an anthology of previous published and unpublished works. His books include: *The Wedding of Everything* (Sherwood Press, 1983); *The Kid is the Man* (Bombshelter Press, 1978); *Slave Sonnets* (Cold Calm Press, 1986); *Fuck Journal* (Hanuman Books, 1987); and *A Taste of Honey* (with David Trinidad) (Cold Calm Press, 1990). In 1993 REsearch published *Bob Flanagan: Supermasochist*, a book of interviews with Bob, with photographs by Sheree.

In collaboration with his partner, Sheree Rose, Bob's performances shocked and inspired audiences from coast to coast. They combined text, video and live performance in a highly personal but universal exploration of sex, illness and mortality. *Visiting Hours*, an installation at the Santa Monica Museum of Art, dealt with Bob's lifelong battle with cystic fibrosis and its influence on his sexuality. The exhibition traveled to New York's New Museum of Contemporary Art and Boston's Museum of the School of Fine Arts.

Bob also appeared on stage with the Groundlings comedy improv ensemble in Los Angeles, and in several films and videos, including the Nine Inch Nails music video *Happiness in Slavery* and the Michael Tolkien film *The New Age*. He performed in Berlin at NGBK gallery, and his final performance took place in April 1995 at Otis College of Art and Design, where he performed autoerotic activities which an audience viewed through a hotel window.

— Amy Gerstler

The preceding text is adapted from notes found on Bob Flanagan's computer after his death.



10/16/95

In a bad mood and getting badder. Taking it out on Sheree. That's what she gets for being there. I want her close but I can't stop the nastiness. It isn't her. It's just how I am when I'm depressed. And I am depressed. Started with the Holly Hunter interview. Excuse me while I put in ear plugs cause Sheree's asleep and breathing heavy and that really bugs me cause I want her up and talking to me and watching tv with me now that it's one in the morning and I'm awake and The Picture of Dorian Gray is on tv after she came down and woke me up after I left her upstairs sleeping on the couch after her long day long drive home from Irvine but never mind that I was pissed that she wasn't watching a tv show about murder in our own Rampart district and then some dumb movie about a terminator substitute teacher blowing kids away while she snored away and I had a bunch of things I wanted to tell her but it wasn't only that she was asleep, I was depressed and out of breath and could barely talk anyway, but I stormed away with my stupid fashion pack drug pump slung over my shoulder like a huffy bitch, short of breath and with a headache like a penned up rodeo horse trying to kick its way out of my head everyone who's critical of my nastiness: put a plastic bag on your head all day and every couple of hours slam your head into the coffee table and press your thumbs

into your eye sockets until your eyeballs squish like bloody grapes and then tell me what a great mood you're in. And then watch your whole career blossom in front of your throbbing shriveled up eyes knowing full well that even as it's happening it's all past tense for you, with the emphasis on tense. So as Sheree, sweet Sheree, sleeps a sleep she richly deserves, unencumbered by the nastiness of the prick beside her, and the portrait of pretty boy Dorian Gray putrefies for what reason I've yet to understand, I'll continue my night time routine, sleep, wake, sleep, wake, sip water, take pills, up and down like a hamster on the wheel. A dying hamster. I guess that's better than a dead fish flushed down the toilet.

from Bob Flanagan's **Pain Journal**, an unpublished work. He continued making entries until very shortly before his death on January 4, 1996.

**O Books: Small Press**  
Distribution, 1814 San Pablo,  
Berkeley, CA 94702

**Moira, Norma Cole,**  
ISBN # 1-882022-28-9, 88 pages, \$9.00.  
"Norma Cole has invented a liquid space where figures enter passageways (sections) of discovery rather than defining... an exceptional book." *Barbara Guest*

**In Memory of My Theories, Rod Smith,** ISBN # 1-882022-29-7, 88 pages, \$9.00. "Rod Smith is the Orwellian ringmaster of an aleatory circus where Chomsky performs Cage and Wittgenstein meets Debord." *Carolyn Forché*. "Smith's art speaks in resistance to treachery." *Kevin Davies*.

**VEL, P. Inman,** \$8.00. P. Inman's work comes to us via his uniquely musical intelligence, mind's ear..

**Memory Play, Carla Harryman,** ISBN # 1 882022-22-X, 72 pages, \$8.50.

**LAPSES, John Crouse,** ISBN # 1-882022-25-4, 72 pages, \$8.00. "the squareroot of hues."



## The Human Museum

*September 18, 1958 I took the day off to be born.*

I have a dress of multiple mirrors  
A fork of many flavors  
A tongue for attraction after death.  
let me study  
your folkways and primal hairs. Smile for this gardener  
gather leaves and  
cover the streets  
A bonsai forest grows in tompkins square park.

My animal bone, my animated bones  
leave

I be a small girl my bone ringlets not yet fused.

I be a small girl of large proportions  
of tremendous feet and little fingers.

I be an Anastasia of wanted and missing posters.  
Of durable dna.

I be the smallest child in the human museum. The smallest mouth on the earth.  
That be me girl mouth of assorted flowers: bitter and sweet, a cornucopia of  
peach stones.

He enlarged the pond, he did, my brother made the hole bigger and a goldfish grew the whole circumference  
round! He stayed in his rooms all those years only coming out to work and vote. He drove a motored bike, racing  
trophies on room all over they made of plastic with motorcycled men on top. He built a track in the valley. He  
made humps of dirt for the bikes to jump. Little children raced with their legs running up and down and jumping  
off. I'm queen of the mountain! I'm Queen of the pet rocks and coal mines. Queen of the sassafras and locust. I'm  
a big drag king!

I was eating a child, then the child was eating me. I nearly lost my leg that way. The long tendons exposed to  
dirty air.

Meanwhile I'm in America wearing a boutneer of gigantic proportions.

In my girlhood I was a girl hood. I was a swing set.  
A bright dish of manic panic properties.

*I sell cookies for girls I sell a girl a cookie.*

The child brides arrived too soon. The men tied tin cans to the girl's trains.

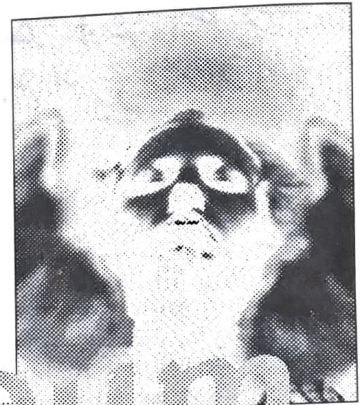
They rattle down the hall: small dogs tied to a pole.

Millions of men of 64 flesh tone crayon colors walked on bones to be here tonight. The girls shine oystershells in  
the moonlight. Buttons of their teeth given to the men for vests and trousers. They said girls bow down and serve.  
Even the youngest open wide.

I went searching for the killers I wore only one glove. I was a lawyer now I have a talk show. We talk about law  
and there are a lot of laws to talk about. But first we're going to visit the early hairdo's of the O.J. Simpson trial.

She be a small girl child with box cutter scars on her face, cut by other girls. She's a small girl child of the goodest  
kind.

Please let me into our home.  
I sell cleaners for the house and car. I sell potholders, seeds, dope,  
smoke and blue-green algae.  
I'm a spokesmodel for god  
Let me in. I'm god's spokesmodel please forgive me.



by Brenda Coultas



# What You Are Reading...

In previous issues we asked what our readers were reading. Some readers responded. Their responses follow:

## ED SMITH:

William Bronk  
William Matthews  
The Civil War by Louis Jordan  
Baseball Weekly  
Asbury Park Press

## CAROLEE SCHNEEMANN:

Male Fantasies, Vol. 1 by Klaus Theweleit  
Female Perversions by Louise J. Kaplan  
Surfaces of Sense by Nicole Brossard  
In the House of the Moon by Jason Elias & Katherine Ketcham  
Between Friends: The Correspondence of Hannah Arendt & Mary McCarthy  
The Cat in Ancient Egypt by Jaromir Malek  
Sacred Pleasure by Riane Eisler  
On Killing by Lt. Col. Dave Grossman  
Lustmord: Sexual Murder in Weimar Germany by Maria Tatar

## VINCENT KATZ:

Ensaio Sobre A Sequeira by Jose Saramago  
Poems & Selected Letters by John Kezats  
Two Journals by James Schuyler & Darragh Park  
Liquid Affairs by Vincent Katz  
Inside & Out of Byzantium by Nina Zivancevic  
Art in the Age of Risk by Bicolás Calas  
Pieces of A Song by Diane DiPrima  
One Train by Kenneth Koch  
Wall-Flowers by Heidi Hedeker

## TRACIE MORRIS:

Where A Nickel Costs A Dime by Willie Perdomo  
The Jaxx Poetry Anthology, ed. Sascha Feinstein & Yusef Komunyakaa  
The Traveler's Literary Companion to Japan by Harry Guest  
The Essential Etheridge Knight  
We Are the Young Magicians by Ruth Foreman  
Horton Hears a Hoo by Dr. Seuss  
Jazz by Toni Morrison  
Orin Orisha by John Mason  
Bring the Noise: A guide to Rap Music & Hip Hop Culture by Havelock Nelson & Michael Gonzales

## ANDREW LEVY:

Three Steps On the Ladder of Writing by Helene Cixous  
Idea of Prose by Giorgio Agamben  
Sand by Raymond Siever  
The Daily Practice of Painting—Writings 1962-1993 by Gerhard Richter  
Dafoe by Leslie Scalapino  
The Blue Octavo Notebooks by Franz Kafka

We Want To See Your Tears Falling Down by Pat Reed  
Human Ceiling by Diane Ward  
Walking by Henry David Thoreau

## BEN FRIEDLANDER:

Gorilla, My Love by Toni Cade Bambara  
The Cyberiad by Stanislaw Lem  
People Who Led to My Plays by Adrienne Kennedy  
Enter Isabel by Paul Metcalf

## BART PLANTENGA:

War Fever by JG Ballard  
The Ethiopian Exhibition by DN Stuefloten  
Pirate Utopias: Moorish Corsairs & European Renegades by Peter Lanborn Wilson  
America by Jean Baudrillard  
Society of the Spectacle by Guy Debord  
Daughters & Rebels by Jessica Mitford  
Still Black, Still Strong by Mumia Abu Jamal, et. al.  
Incidents & Eiffel Tower by Roland Barthes  
Animal Sanitation & Disease Control by R.R. Dykstra

## ANSELM HOLLO:

The Holy Forest by Robin Blaser  
Sworn Before Cranes by Merrill Gilfillan  
Deux etages avec terrasse et vue sur le detroit by Emmanuel Hocquard  
One Train by Kenneth Koch  
Closer to me & Closer...(the Language of Heaven) and Desamere by Alice Notley  
At Passages by Michael Palmer  
Opening the Eyelid by David Ratray  
Tallien: A Brief Romance by Frederic Tuten  
After Liberalism by Immanuel Wallerstein  
The Last of the Templars by William Watson

## GEORGE-THERESE DICKENSON:

The Coming Plague by Laurie Garrett  
A Novel of Thank You by Gertrude Stein  
Scientific American: Science & Medicine  
"The Relique" by John Donne  
On An(archy) and Schizoanalysis by Rolando Perez  
An Introduction to the Irish Language  
Picture Theory by Nichole Brossard  
Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens

## JORDAN DAVIS:

My Trip to New York by Bill Luoma  
The Erin Medley Affair by Michael Hayward

Smoke by Ivan Turgenev  
Paradise Lost by Pierre-Jean Jouve  
The History of English Prosody by George Saintsbury  
The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglas, An American Slave I Got To Know by Stephen Malmude

## DENNIS BARONE:

The Suffering Self: Pain and Narrative in the Early Christian Era by Judith Perkins  
numen by Cole Swenson  
The Voice Impersonator by Thomas Bernhard

## CAROLE BERGE:

Pictures from the Water Trade by John David Morley  
Threading the Maze by Janine Pommy Vega  
Mysteries of the Body by Steve Kowitz  
Stages & Views by Penny Harter  
Silence & License by Bill Fox  
ARTnews  
Poetry Project Newsletter

## RICHARD KOSTELANETZ:

Voices from the Catholic Worker by Rosalie R. Troester  
Steal This Book (25th Anniversary edition) by Abbie Hoffman  
The Making of Americans by Gertrude Stein  
Music Since 1900 by Nicolas Slonimsky  
Format and Anxiety by Paul Goodman

## ROBERT GLUCK:

Wittgenstein's Nephew by Thomas Bernhard  
Hourglass by Danilo Kis  
Rat Bohemia by Sarah Schulman  
Chelsea Girls by Eileen Myles  
Dialogues in Paradise by Can Xue  
The Rosy Medallions by Camille Roy  
There Never Was A Rose Without a Thorn by Carla Harryman  
The New Fuck You: Adventures in Lesbian Reading, ed. Eileen Myles & Liz Kotz  
Strategies of Deviance: Studies in Gay Male Representation by Earl Jackson Jr.

## SANDY BERRIGAN:

One Writer's Beginning by Eudora Welty  
Family Memories by Rebecca West  
The Reef by Edith Wharton  
Dark Quartet by Anne Reid Banks  
A Time To Dance A Time To Weep by Rumer Godden  
Muddling Through Madagascar by Dervla Murphy  
A Fortunate Life by A.B. Facey  
Walking Words by Eduardo Galleano  
Song of Solomon by Toni Morrison  
Collected Poems of Mary Oliver

## DONNA CARTELLI:

Anna Akhmatova: Poet & Prophet by Roberta Reeder  
St. Petersburg-A Cultural History by Solomon Volkov



# PATRICIA LANDRUM

## 1951 - 1996

Patricia Landrum, poet, actress and mother, died in February after a long struggle with sarcoidosis. She is survived by her daughter, Cassandra (19) and her son, Christopher (22).

Patricia's devotion to poetry, to promoting poets, and to making links between poetry communities also survives. She was a member of the Poetry Project Board of Directors. Before her illness she was a frequent performer at the Nuyorican Poets Cafe, a founding member of the performing group, *Cayenne*, a member of *the Stoop* poetry workshop, and she was a supportive, loving host to a poetry reading series at the Speak Easy Cafe. For the last two years she lived in Jersey City and performed frequently in the Jersey City poetry scene. She published her chapbook of poems, *Sweet*, in 1992. Her work was included in the anthology, **ALoud: Voices from the Nuyorican Poets Cafe**. About a year ago, during one of her many hospital stays, she checked out of the hospital against the advice of doctors because she had a poetry reading to do.

When I asked her if it was a good idea, she said to me, *This is why I live*.

Knowing she was dying, Patricia collected her new poems in the form of a book, **Mary and Other Ordinary Women**, and asked me to publish them posthumously. Patricia lived long enough to edit the manuscript with me and to work on putting together a fundraiser on January 20 at the Nuyorican Poets Cafe for the book. She attended the event, oxygen tank in tow, and sat at a table while her friends and admirers performed her poems and said a few words of love and appreciation to her. One week later Patricia went into the hospital again. She never got out of intensive care. The cause of death was heart failure.

In **Mary and Other Ordinary Women** (Cayenne Press), each poem is about a different woman. Each poem deals with a different take on love. Echoing through every word that people have said about Patricia is the word love. To me she was the original Diva — a woman who knew that love was her own — that when she gave love it did not leave her. She retained it. It was hers. It was her. It survives her.

—Sheila Alson

from Cold Spring

Early morning sunlight  
lifts mist  
into the still air —  
a young squirrel flips  
under a wheel of a car.

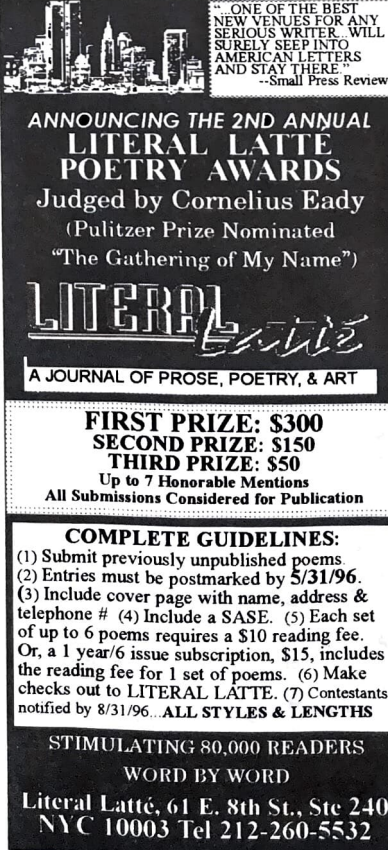
\*

The colours are blowing floozies  
against the sky  
down below our heads —  
the world is talented enough  
for its own pleasure.

\*

Everything I do for you  
under the eves of an afternoon  
is taken from a book  
so the gulls will quiet  
and the guests stop muttering.

Alan Davies



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NEW VENUES FOR ANY  
SERIOUS WRITER, WILL  
SURELY SEEP INTO  
AMERICAN LETTERS  
AND STAY THERE."  
--Small Press Review

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(1) Submit previously unpublished poems.  
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(3) Include cover page with name, address & telephone # (4) Include a SASE. (5) Each set of up to 6 poems requires a \$10 reading fee. Or, a 1 year/6 issue subscription, \$15, includes the reading fee for 1 set of poems. (6) Make checks out to LITERAL LATTE. (7) Contestants notified by 8/31/96. **ALL STYLES & LENGTHS**

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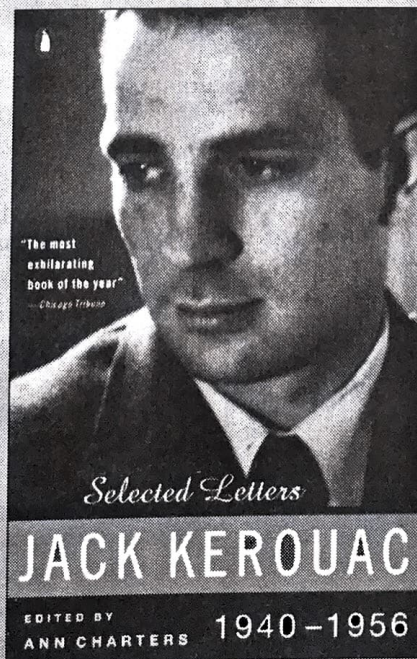
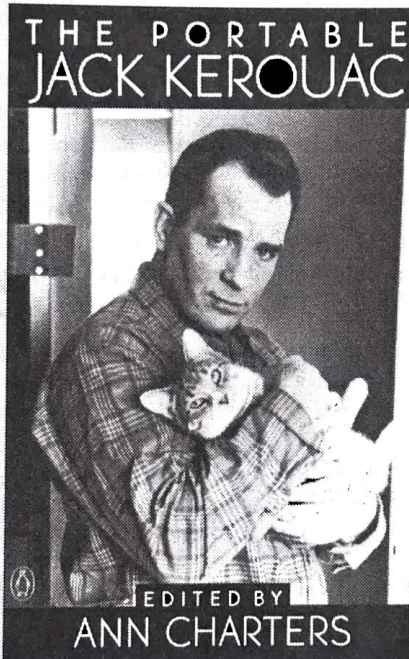
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—*GQ*

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ROMnibus

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 Avec # 10  
 ACM # 30  
 Dimensions of Midnight by Cecil Hemley  
 Delirium by Barbara Hamby  
 Great Topics of the World by Goldbarth  
 The Place of Dead Roads by William S. Burroughs  
 The Poetry Project Newsletter

**TODD COLBY:**

The Man Without Qualities by Robert Musil  
 Tears and Saints by E.M. Cioran  
 On the Heights of Despair by E.M. Cioran  
 The Gnostic Gospels by Elaine Pagels  
 Can You Hear, Bird by John Ashbery  
 The Portable Rabelais, translated by Samuel Putnam

The Book of Disquiet by Fernando Pessoa  
 The Bobbsey Twins on a Houseboat by Laura Lee Hope  
 Defoe by Leslie Scalapino  
 unpublished manuscript by Brenda Coultas

**Cliff Fyman:**

Einstein: The Life and Times by Ronald W. Clarke  
 Nine Gates To the Chasidic Mysteries by Jiri Langer  
 Thirsting for Peace in a Raging Century by Ed Sanders  
 Charles Olson & Robert Creeley: The Complete Correspondence  
 Dark City by Charles Bernstein  
 Bastard Out of Carolina by Dorothy Allison  
 Moral by Merry Fortune  
 Armenian Papers by Harry Mathews  
 The Faith to Doubt by Steven Batchelor

**ELAINE EQUI:**

One Art (Letters of Elizabeth Bishop)  
 Modernist Quartet by Frank Lentricchia  
 Raw Deal: New & Selected Poems by Jerome Sala  
 Robinson Crusoe by Daniel Defoe  
 Veronica by Nicholas Christopher  
 Selected Poems of William Bronk  
**HARRIS SCHIFF:**  
 Microserfs by Douglas Coupland  
 Origin of the Species by Barbara Barg  
 Jack Spicer by Edward Halsey Foster

The Job by William S. Burroughs  
 I Love Paris by Alice Notley  
 Diamonds Are A Girl's Best Friend by Elinor Nauen  
 Collected Books by Jack Spicer  
 Neuromancer by William Gibson  
 Snow Crash by Neal Stephenson

**TED GREENWALD:**

The Death of Rhythm & Blues by Nelson George  
 New & Selected Poems by Ron Padgett  
 (Ted confesses that this year was more of a movie year for him)

**JOE ELIOT:**

Ghost Tantras by Michael McClure  
 How I Work As A Poet by Lew Welch  
 The Cloud of Unknowing  
 The Diary of Nijinsky  
 Showings, Julia of Norwich

**MITCH HIGHFILL:**

Complete Poems of Blaise Cendrars, transl. by Ron Padgett  
 Heavenly Tree/Soluble Forest by Gerrit Lansing  
 Not Me by Eileen Myles  
 The Art of Memory by Francis Yates  
 Earthlight by Andre Breton, transl. by Bill Zavatsky & Zack Rogow  
 Along the Rails by Elio Schneeman  
 At Passages by Michael Palmer  
 The Collected Poems of Charles Olson  
 Selected Poems of Simon Pettet  
 Archaic Revival by Terrence McKenna

**Mario Mezzacappa (1972-1996)**

Mario Mezzacappa was an active member of the Poetry Project's community. He served as an Editorial Intern at the Project during the Spring and Fall of 1994 and read and performed at many events here over the past few years. Mario was a talented and promising poet who had a significant impact on those of us who had the good fortune to come in contact with him and his work. He is missed greatly.

**Notes on the Class**

It is still dark when I wake up  
 to make the coffee before my  
 8:00 a.m. class-multiculturalism.  
 I like the way that sounds.  
 Lately I am able to see my breath  
 in the morning  
 after darkness.  
 I arrive to the circle.  
 Everyone is having their coffee  
 in the light.  
 I can see well in the circle.  
 I can hear well in the circle.  
 Everyone sees and hears me.  
 Nothing escapes  
 even this early.  
 Their's is a tight hold  
 (everyone is gripping a rope  
 waiting for a chance to speak.)  
 Many things are said which help me later  
 to walk straight.  
 I wait to try and find my breath.

— Mario Mezzacappa

WRITERS FOR A WATER BOUND CITY

*Venice, Italy*

May 4 - June 1, 1996

**SITE SPECIFIC**

ZENOBIO INSTITUTE-INTERNATIONAL SUMMER WORKSHOP

Four weeks of intensive literary and performance activity in the magnificent and quiet setting of the baroque palace of Ca' Zenobio, a register national monument.

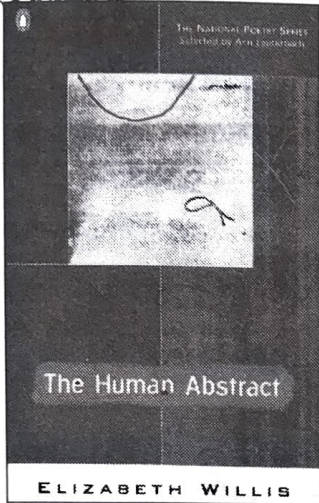
**Faculty** : Charles Bernstein, Lee Ann Brown, Erica Hunt, Lucio Pozzi, Julie Patton, Fiona Templetan, Tom Raworth

Fees includes housing. Work published and archived. Academic credit arranged.  
 Contact: Zenobio c/o Segue Found., 303 East 8th str. NY, NY 10009  
 EricaLin@AOL.COM





# Provocative Poetry from PENGUIN



Elizabeth Willis

## THE HUMAN ABSTRACT

The National Poetry Series winner for 1994, Elizabeth Willis's *The Human Abstract* is a stunning and original collection that takes its title from William Blake's *Songs of Innocence and Experience*.

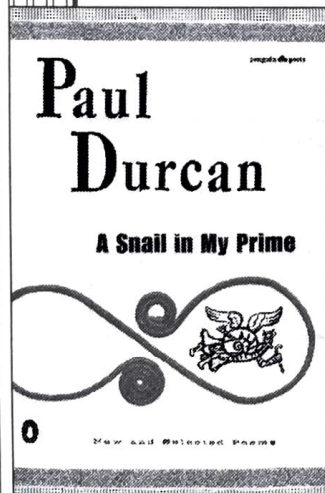
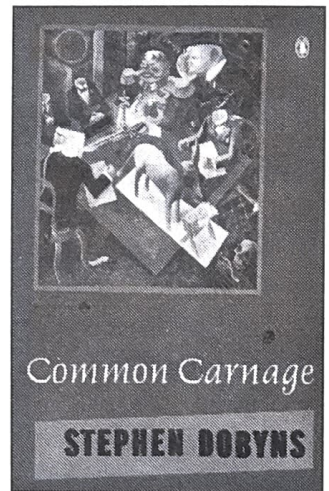
"A haunting contemporary song.... This is poetry of amazing intelligence and grace." —Ann Lauterbach

Stephen Dobyns

## COMMON CARNAGE

This fantastically diverse collection of poems explores nothing less than the question of what it means to be human, answered with all the ironies and complexities such a question demands.

"Stephen Dobyns is one of the very finest poets writing in America today. His poems are brave, ravenous, intensely moving, and utterly his own." —Thomas Lux



Paul Durcan

## A SNAIL IN MY PRIME

Internationally acclaimed Irish poet Paul Durcan has been mesmerizing worldwide audiences for three decades with his euphonious, wildly funny yet sorrowful poems of ordinary people and their private lamentations. His voice is bound to seduce American audiences as well.

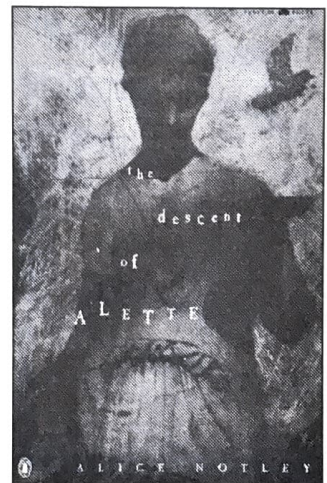
"Durcan can, like Orpheus, charm the birds from the trees; he is that kind of poet." —Derek Mahon

Alice Notley

## THE DESCENT OF ALETTE

In this long-awaited major work, Alice Notley gives us a feministic epic, a bold journey into the deeper realms. *The Descent of Alette* is a rich odyssey of transformation in the tradition of *The Inferno*.

"Alice Notley bears impeccable witness and thinks with a clarity that can break the heart." —Robert Creeley



PENGUIN BOOKS



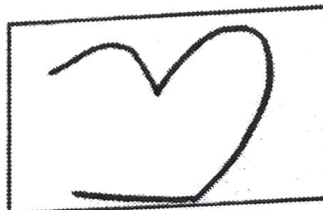


**Vice, Advice & Eccentricities:  
Life Growing Up in a Small Town  
of A Hundred Fires, Cuba as told by  
Luis Comabella in the Tenth Street Lounge**

I was always hanging around  
with the most depraved well-known  
homosexuals in my little town  
I was always most attracted  
to the company of eccentrics  
rather than the company of  
humdrum bourgeois  
I didn't like baseball  
and that's very dangerous for a boy  
in Cuba not to like  
On the other hand  
I was Cuban national champion  
in the 100-meter butterfly  
a style that pre-told  
my later existence  
I slept with the entire swim  
team except one but that's  
because I didn't want to sleep with him  
I always considered the best  
poem would be the lived  
poem not the written poem  
so I set out to live my life  
in a poem  
I was always influenced by Walt  
Whitman  
There were moments of ecstasy  
moments of madness  
actually a whole life of madness  
Just before I left Cuba  
at age 15 my father told  
me three things  
If I ever get syphilis  
don't be ashamed to go  
to a doctor The second one  
I forget The third one was is  
I ever find out you're gay  
I'll put a bullet in your head  
That's around the time  
I left Cuba

Cliff Fyman

these down  
Spine rederish it  
house speed of lad  
it's speed of lad  
every parpointing



nobody ladies  
her are the  
are nobbdy ladies feelers  
the feelers  
her

--Bruce Andrews

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NEW YORK, NEW YORK  
10003

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(212) 260 7853



# By Apples Moved Not Apples

It's a pity walking up stairs eyeing ourselves  
picking up water, quaint platter,  
Shoulder to kissed and carried shoulder.  
Something less the 365 foot full sky  
Heads over a feather-dressed unceremonious  
Chunk of view, desk contents chirp, reliant  
And random light lies at the heart. Returns  
All the more a lullaby procedure nightly  
Distance read without a parade at top speed  
Finally happy as sad, we the news.

Detour but consider the gaps, sounds attached  
To an object, not smooth inclusion  
Or fixed position, beginning ever  
Pronounced close to the lips, where  
Some part is lost. Our findings weigh  
24 little hours later, chicory crowned  
Not bays, drudge, but amusement, fresh  
Argument, whistling bird, fine unraveled  
Roaring dawn, fit of dicethrows, curly day.

Each minute thing shadows the other  
All the more collection of starts,  
A teaspoon soon the tablespoon.  
Come, come now under giant atoms  
At vacant intervals, over head  
Essayed chaos, sabotage, smooth  
Answers the smooth thrown shade.  
Apropos every star and quiver eyes  
The family, drawn under, dug in willing.

It's a pity walking up stairs, eyeing ourselves  
Picking up water, attache, quaint platter,  
Shoulder to kissed and carried shoulder.  
Something less the 365 foot full sky  
Heads over a speeding dress, unceremonious  
Chunks of view, desk contents trap, chirp  
All the more a lullaby procedure. Reliant  
And random dancing happy as sad, delicate  
Circumstance, critical infiltration of flirts.

— Melanie Neilson

## POETRY FROM SERPENT'S TAIL

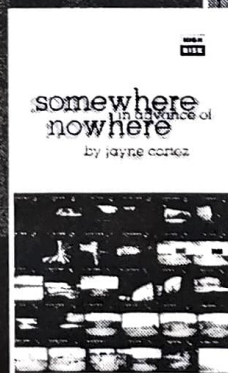
**HIGH  
RISK  
BOOKS**

**POWERLESS**  
by Tim Dlugos



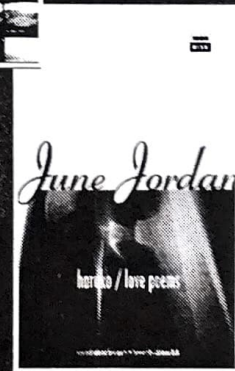
**YOU GOT TO  
BURN TO SHINE**  
by John Giorno

**ANSWER SONG**  
by David Trinidad



**SOMEWHERE  
IN ADVANCE OF  
NOWHERE**  
by Jayne Cortez

**HARUKO/  
LOVE POEMS**  
by June Jordan



AVAILABLE AT BETTER BOOKSTORES



# submit...

**BLACFAX** is looking for work by African-American female scribes for an anthology, *The Nubian Gallery*. Deadline is March 31, 1996. Send submissions with SASE to **Bob McNeil, Poetry Anthology Editor, BLACFAX, Midtown Station, P.O. Box 542, New York, NY 10018.**

**1996 Chiron Review Poetry Contest** offers \$100 prize & \$50 prizes, as well as publication in Winter 1996 issue. \$5 entry fee. Enter up to 6 poems, name on each page. Make checks payable to Michael Hathaway or Chiron Review. Send with SASE to: **Chiron Review Poetry Contest, Jane Hathaway, 522 E. South Ave., St. John, KS, 67576-2212.**

**Syzygy!** magazine is welcoming submissions. Each work submitted under separate cover, include SASE. Send submissions to: **Loree Harrell, SYZYGY!, 13175 SE Marsh Road, Sandy, OR, 97055.**

**The Opening of the Field: A Robert Duncan Conference** will be held at SUNY Buffalo on April 18-20, 1996. Featuring Susan Howe, Nathaniel Mackey, Marjorie Perloff, Robin Blaser & other. For more information, call **(716) 645-3810.**

Interested in the marketing of magazines? Try the **Literary Magazine Conference**, April 25-27 in Atlanta. For more information, call **Lynn Williams Leech at (540) 463-8765.** **Gathering of the Tribes** is in need of

financial assistance. Please send whatever you can spare to **Gathering of the Tribes Inc., P.O. Box 20693, Tompkins Square Station, New York, NY 10009.**

**Anamnesis Press** offers a **Poetry Chapbook Competition**. Submit 20-30 pages with \$10 entry fee. Winners receive \$500 plus they get a chapbook published by the Press. 2nd Prize includes chapbook publication & \$200. Include SASE. Send MS to **Anamnesis Press, Chapbook Competition, P.O. Box 581153, Salt Lake City, UT, 84158-1153.**

## MISQUOTED

In his review of **Transbluency: The Selected Poems of Amiri Baraka/LeRoi Jones (1961 - 1995)**, Joel Lewis writes:

*Some detractors (like Gilbert Sorrentino in his NY Times Book Review [review] of the 1979 **Selected**) suggest that Baraka threw away his talent after **The Dead Lecturer** for the career of a political activist/provocateur.*

I have no idea where Mr. Lewis found this information concerning my opinion of Mr. Baraka's life and work, since I did not review his 1979 **Selected Poems** in the NY Times Book Review, nor, for that matter, anywhere else. In point of fact, I have never reviewed any of Mr. Baraka's collections of poetry, nor have I ever suggested, in writing or in speech, that he "threw away" his talent.

Back in the 60's, Mr. Baraka and I had many differences of opinion concerning the political role of the artist. I dare say that we still do. The gulf, however, between such differences and my putative denigration of his work is vast indeed.

*Sincerely,  
Gilbert Sorrentino*

# Letters

Dear Reader,

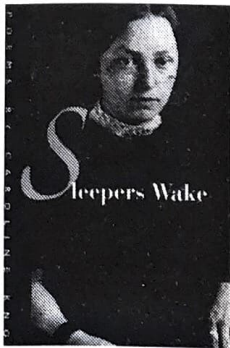
I will not be editing the **Poetry Project Newsletter** next year due to professional and family commitments. There just aren't enough hours in a day for me to continue in this post. I must say that it has been a pure pleasure to work with **Ed Friedman** and **Joanne Wasserman** on this newsletter. The Poetry Project continues to offer a sense of community to a diverse range of poets whose work can be seen and heard in the context created so many years ago by **Anne Waldman, Joel Oppenheimer, Paul Blackburn** and others.

I want to thank my designer, **Melora Zaner-Godsey** whose sense of style has challenged and delighted our readership. Also I want to thank **Brenda Coultas** for handling our advertising, which is crucial to the success of the the publication.

*Sincerely,  
Mitch Highfill*



# POETRY FROM TIMKEN PUBLISHERS

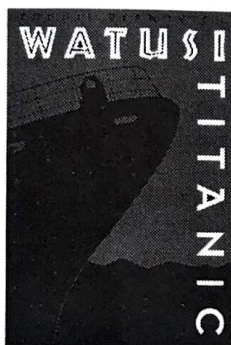


## Sleepers Wake by Caroline Knox

Concerning a world we only thought we knew, Caroline Knox is winsome, alarming and hilarious. There is absolutely nobody like her. —Amy Clampitt

This poet is a wizard. —James Merrill

70 pp. • \$11.00 • ISBN 0-943221-20-X



## Watusi Titanic by Connie Deanovich

Connie Deanovich is the pure wild thing of American poetry and towers above her exordianarily timid generation like Paul Bunyan over Bemidji.... She leaves the rest of the boys and girls gasping in her parti-colored exhaust. —August Kleinzahler

The secret is out: this book is a great find. —Elaine Equi

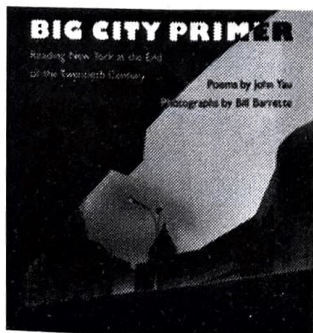
Few poets are as inventive as Connie Deanovich. Her statement, "Imagination must have dirt," is a profound reminder that poetry has its sources beneath our feet. —Paul Hoover

88 pp. • \$12.00 • ISBN 0-943221-24-2

## TWO VISIONS OF URBAN DYSTOPIA

### Big City Primer

poems by John Yau & photographs by Bill Barrette



132 pp. • 90 duotones • \$25.00  
ISBN 0-943221-13-7

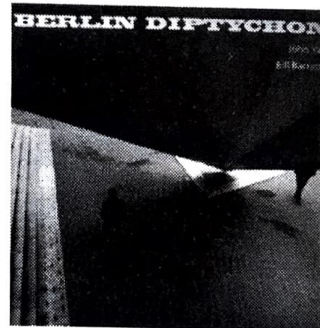
*Big City Primer* is a lively collage of photography, meditation, jazz, and prose poetry—a book that should floor any lover of New York City and its craziness.

—Oscar Hijuelos

**Winner of the 1992 Brendan Gill Prize**

To see familiar cities with new eyes is to recover their potential and their metaphysics. What a rich and mysterious book Berlin turns out to be in this reading of a poet and a photographer.

—Charles Simic



96 pp. • 47 duotones • \$19.95  
ISBN 0-943221-23-4

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# the poetry project

## APRIL

- 2 *Poems for the New Millennium: Volume 1*  
An evening celebrating the publication of this mega anthology, hosted by co-edi
- 9 **Open Reading, sign-up at 7:30 pm [8 pm]**  
[NOTE: Due to Holiday schedule this open reading is on a Tuesday]
- 10 **Matthew Courtney & M. Doughty**  
Matthew Courtney is a poet whose work will appear in the forthcoming compilation cd *Poem Fone II*. Courtney hosts the popular Sunday night open mic at Biblio's Cafe & Bookstore, which the New York Press described as the City's best open reading two years in a row. M. Doughty is a writer who studied poetry at the New School for Social Research and the vocalist and rhythm guitar player for the band Soul Coughing.
- 12 **A Fist Full of Rupees: A Multi-media Travelogue**  
Writer and senior editor of *Sensitive Skin Magazine*, Christian X. Hunter, will present slides, audio clips and excerpts from his recently completed, irreverent Indian travelogue entitled *A Fist Full of Rupees*. Hunter is a poet, prose writer and musician whose work has appeared in *The Unbearables Anthology*, the *American Book Review*, *New Observations* and elsewhere. [10:30 pm]
- 15 **Samantha Coerbell & Rebecca Moore**  
Samantha Coerbell recently toured abroad with the Nuyorican Poets Cafe Live. She is currently working on a multi-media project with the writer's collaborative. AS IS, Rebecca Moore's debut cd entitled *Admiral Charcoal's Song* was released this past fall on the Knitting Factory label.
- 17 **A Celebration of Bob Kaufman**  
In honor of Bob Kaufman's Birthday and Coffee House Press' recent publication of *Cranial Guitar: Selected Poems*, Ruby Dee, Ossie Davis, Cecil Taylor, David Henderson, Ted Joans, Raymond Foye, Reuben Jackson, Kaye McDonough, Maria Damon, Julie Patton, Ira Cohen, Nealy Cherkovski and others present readings and reminiscences in tribute to the late great poet, political activist and hipster. **[In the main sanctuary, admission is \$8 \$5 for Poetry Project members]**
- 19 **The Dark Room Collective: A Drive-By Reading**  
Featuring readings by Dark Room Collective members Vera Beatty, Nehassain deGannes, Thomas Sayers Ellis, Major Jackson, Trasi Johnson, John Keene, Sharan Strange, Natasha Thretheway, Artress Bethany White and Kevin Young. Poet, Cornelius Eady will introduce the Collective. [10:30 pm]

- 13 **Marcella Durand & Jocelyn Seidenberg**  
Marcella Durand's chapbook *Lapsus Linguae* was recently published as part of the itua-tions Press Series. Her poetry has appeared in *Talisman*, *Monster Trucks*, *The Brooklyn Review* and elsewhere. Poet/performer, Jocelyn Seidenberg is currently working on a col-laboration with Brian Strang and her writing will appear in the forthcoming anthology, *Tense Present*, published by Incognito Press.
- 15 **Susan Howe & Eléni Siklianos**  
Susan Howe's collection of poems, *Frame Structure: Early Poems 1974-1979* will be pub-lished by New Directions in May. Her extensive essay on the work of filmmaker Chris Marker will appear in a collection of writing on documentary film entitled *Beyond Document*. Eléni Siklianos is a 1995 recipient of a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. Her most recent collection, *Poetics of the Exclamation Point*, was published by Rodent Press.
- 17 **Pedestrian Union: A Text-Based Experiment**  
Designed as a composite portrait of the walking class, this evening will present notes from the sidewalks by Marc Ribot, Laurie Weeks, Brenda Coultas, Lilah Friedland, Shannon Ebner & the Ergonomic Ensemble. The literary weather report of 1996. [10:30 pm]
- 20 **Rinde Eckert & Donald Gardiner**  
Rinde Eckert is a singer, composer, dancer, actor, writer and director whose solo and col-laborative performance and theater pieces are performed throughout the world. Eckert is currently completing commissions for the New York State Shakespeare Festival and National Public Radio's *New American Radio Series*. During the 1970s, Donald Gardiner worked as a co-director and actor with the London Living Theater. He currently lives in Amsterdam where he performs monologues which combine poetry and theater. He will be presenting his new work *Chicken with Madness* at the Poetry Project.
- 22 **Maggie Estep & John S. Hall**  
Maggie Estep's new book *Emotional Idiot* will be published in February 1997. She is cur-rently writing material for a new cd and working on a novel entitled *Portable Souls*, John S. Hall has recorded one solo and six albums with his groups *King Missile* and *King Missile [Dog-Fly-Religion]*. His new book, *Jesus Was Way Cool*, is available from Soft Skull Press.
- 24 **Fuck Off**  
A farewell reading for *The New Fuck You: Adventures In Lesbian Writing* and an introduction to the forthcoming *New Fuck You Too*, featuring readings by Pam Sneed, Laurie Weeks, Deborah Weinstein, Shannon Ebner and others. Hosted by the collection editors Eileen Myles and Liz Kotz. [10:30 pm]

22 **Quique Aviles & Paul Skiff**

Quique Aviles is a poet, performer and actor from El Salvador, living in the US since 1980. He is the founder of the LatiNegro Theater in Washington, D.C. where he lives and per-

27 **Lisa Buscani & Regie Cabico**

Former National Poetry Grand Slam Champion, Lisa Buscani is the author of *Janple*. Her



**22** **Quique Aviles & Paul Skiff**  
Quique Aviles is a poet, performer and actor from El Salvador, living in the US since 1980. He is the founder of the LatiNegro Theater in Washington, D.C. where he lives and performs his work. Aviles, the recipient of numerous awards, continues to tour his work around the country and work on a variety of educational projects. Producer, visual artist and writer, Paul Skiff, has been performing his work in New York for many years. He co-produced and created the sound design for the *Nuyorican Symphony* cd as well as *Poetry Live from the Knitting Factory*.

**24** **Douglas Oliver & Johnny Stanton**  
Douglas Oliver is the author of numerous collections of verse including: *In the Cave of Succession; Kind*, which was termed "the finest poetry of the year," by the *London Times*; and the forthcoming *Selected Poems* as well as a novel *The Harmless Building*. Johnny Stanton is a poet and prose writer whose Johnny Stanton is a poet and prose writer whose formal education took place in convents in Belgium, Egypt and England. Stanton attended the University at Heidelberg where he was editor of the literary journal, *Dipressen Kraut*. In 1986 his first novel, *Mangled Hands*, received the coveted Fruit Cake Award.

**26** **Pome Movies**  
An evening of films created or inspired by poets and poetry featuring new and classic works by Joseph Cornell, Carolee Schneemann, Henry Hills, Lori Hiris, Spring Ulmer, Joel Schlemowitz, Marianne Vitale, Jill Rapaport and others. [10:30 pm]

**29** **Joe Elliot & Milt Kessler**  
Joe Elliot curates the Sunday series at Biblio's Cafe & Bookstore, and is the author of two collections of poetry, *A Musty Bone* and *Poems To Be Centered On Much Much Larger Sheets Of Paper*. Milton Kessler is the author of six books of poetry including, most recently, *The Grand Concourse* and *Riding First Car*. Kessler served as editor of *Choice*, a magazine of poetry and photography, from 1972-1980.

**MAY**

**2-5** **On Content: The Poetry Project 1996 Symposium**  
Four days of lectures readings, performances, panel discussions, workshops and community gatherings.

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

**8** **Thomas Adcock & Darius James**  
Thomas Adcock's most recent novel, *Thrown-Away Child*, was described by *Publisher's Weekly* as sharing "the New Orleans underbelly few tourists get to see...offering several chilling moments to savor." Adcock is an Edgar Award winning novelist whose books include *Dark Maze*, *Drown All The Dogs* and *Devil's Heaven*. Darius James is the author of the novel *Negrophobia* and *That's Blaxploitation!*: *Roots of the Boad Asses Rated X* by *Tude An All-Whyte Jury*. James' work has been published in numerous journals and magazines, including the *Village Voice*, *Spin* and *Grand Street*.

**10** **Workshop Reading**  
An evening of readings by members of the Poetry Project's 1995-96 Writing Workshops. [10:30 pm]

**27** **Lisa Buscanti & Regie Cabico**  
Former National Poetry Grand Slam Champion, Lisa Buscanti, is the author of *Jangle*. Her recent one-woman shows *Carnivale Animale* and *At That Time* received critical and popular acclaim. Regie Cabico is a former New York City Poetry Slam winner and Lollapalooza tour poet. Cabico opened up for MTV's "Free Your Mind" Spoken Word Tour. He is the curator of The American Crafts Museum reading series as well as a contributing editor to the magazine *Excurses*.

**29** **Yukihide Maeshima Hartman & M. Nourbese Philip**  
Yukihide Maeshima Hartman is the author of several books of poetry including *Hot Footsteps*, *Ping* and most recently, *A Coloring Book*. His work will appear in *The World* #52. Poet, prose writer and lecturer, M. Nourbese Philip, is the author of *Looking for Livingston: An Odyssey of Silence*. Her work has recently appeared in *Harbony*, *The Exact Change Yearbook* and the *American Book Review*.

**31** **Long Shot Magazine Reading**  
Featuring contributors to the magazine including Willie Perdomo, Nancy Mercado, Yvette Davilla, Jesus Papoleto Melendez, Edwin Torres, Erik LaPrade and Amina Baraka. [10:30 pm]

**JUNE**

**5** **Robert Creeley: 70th Birthday Reading**  
Robert Creeley, poet, novelist, short story writer, essayist, editor and teacher was born in Arlington, Massachusetts in 1926. As a Harvard student, Creeley helped edit a special e.e. cummings issue of the school's literary journal *Woke*, in which Creeley's first published poem, "Return", appeared. During the 1950s Creeley taught at Black Mountain College and he was an editor of the innovative literary journal *Black Mountain Review*. *For Love: Poems 1950-1960*, published in 1962, firmly established Creeley's position in American Letters and he has remained an incredibly prolific writer throughout his career. In 1987 Creeley was elected to the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. He is the recipient of two Fulbright Fellowships, two Guggenheim Fellowships and numerous other awards. Presently the Samuel P. Capen Professor of Poetry and Humanities at the State University of New York at Buffalo, Robert Creeley is the author of many books of poetry and prose including *Echoes*, *Later*, *Momory Gardens* and *Windows*. [in the main sanctuary]

The Poetry Project is located at St. Mark's Church in the Bowery • 131 East 10th St., New York, NY 10003  
All events \$6, beginning at 8 pm unless otherwise noted. Programs subject to change. For information (212) 674-0910.



# Writing Workshops at the Poetry Project

## Poetry & Writing Workshop

Taught by David Henderson • Tuesdays at 7 PM through April 30th

For beginners to veterans, preferably with manuscripts in mind. With an emphasis on new writing on a weekly basis and on previous work only as it relates to the overall concept of the formulation of a manuscript. Not just limited to poets. Prose writers, fiction, non-fiction writers, letter and journal writers and artists in other disciplines are welcome. The emphasis is on the poetry that exists in all writing, in all art, in all endeavor.

David Henderson is the author of the best selling biography of Jimi Hendrix entitled **Scuse Me While I Kiss The Sky**. His Books of poems include **De Mayor of Harlem** and **The Low East**.

## Poetry Workshop

Taught by Maureen Owen • Saturdays at 12 PM through April 27th

Each session will focus on one poet's works. The workshop will read poems aloud and participants will discuss the works.

If the poet used a particular poetic form, we will look at that and other examples of the form. Then using our reading/discussion as inspiration, we will have a "free writing" period. The assignment for the week will incorporate material from the free writing and is to be written inspired by the poet we have studied that session or poetic form we have been discussing. Each week participants will read their own assignment poem and entertain comments.

Maureen Owen is the author of eight books of poetry including, **Zombie Notes**, **Amelia Earhart**, **Imaginary Income** and **Untapped Maps**. She edited Telephone Books and Telephone magazine through thirty titles of the press and nineteen issues of the magazine.

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*. Participants may register in person at the Project office or via mail (The Poetry Project, 131 East 10th St., NYC 10003).

Many thanks to everyone who contributed to the fund. It was and is both needed and appreciated. What I had was a cerebral hemorrhage caused by an aneurysm—the weakness of the artery wall was congenital (my father and his father both died of "strokes" also at age 49, which is strange.) Perhaps I could have avoided a brain hemorrhage by finding a way to lower blood pressure. Also, none seems to know the relationship between heredity and stroke. Meanwhile I have studied even more about the brain and am currently able to do everything but read and physically write. I also have little balance and hardly any memory of dreams and no one seems to know exactly why (about dreams). I am looking for a swimming pool and a neurologist who's willing to answer questions. The last neurologist I talked to said he couldn't believe anyone cared about their dreams. I thought he said genes. Thank you again!

— Bernadette Mayer

## WORLD #51

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# On Content

The Poetry Project's 1996 Symposium  
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*Four days of readings, workshops, discussions and parties with Jane Augustine, Amiri Baraka, Victor Hernandez Cruz, Elaine Equi, Kenward Elmslie, Jessica Hagedorn, Robert Hale, John Hejduk, Michael Heller, Barbara Henning, Robert Hershon, Mitch Highfill, Gary Lenhart, Eileen Myles, Alice Notley, Jill Rapaport, Sonia Sanchez, David Shapiro, Edwin Torres, Carl Watson and many more. Poster with detailed schedule available April 1st.*

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# reviews



**On the Great Atlantic Rainway: Selected Poems 1950-1988** by Kenneth Koch, Alfred A. Knopf (New York, 1994); \$25.00 hardcover.

Robertson Davies once had a pretentious visitor who said that Davies' "use of humor" would keep his books from living. Davies writes, *It was spoken as if he suspected me of injecting myself with humor as with some vile drug, and then sitting down with peals of manic laughter to write so long as the fit lasted, without a prudent regard for my claims on immortality which notoriously wants no truck with humor.*

Kenneth Koch's use of humor has kept him on the edge of the serious admiration he deserves. He's acknowledged as one of the quadrumvirate of the New York School (first generation), along with John Ashbery, Frank O'Hara, and James Schuyler, but there's often a raised eyebrow among those who mention him in that company. While Ashbery, O'Hara, and Schuyler can be witty or humorous, Koch is often, let's admit it, laugh-out-loud funny. And the Comic Muse has too often been seen in modernist circles as a disreputable companion, OK for a furtive, one-night stand, but not someone to bring home to Mother. Koch is funny, his more dour critics say; therefore, he must be "light." Koch has often found himself the odd man out — a straight man in a circle of gay poets; too well-educated and admiring of the past to be a Beat; too wise-assed to be your normal academic.

On the Great Atlantic Rainway, Koch's selected poems, gives ample evidence that his muse, comic though she may be, is also a heavy hitter. This volume covers somewhat different ground than Koch's selected

volume published ten years ago. About half of this volume did not appear in the earlier book. He has drawn from six more years' worth of poems; he has included several short plays or scenes from plays; and he has taken excerpts from *Ko* and *The Duplications*, which to my mind are among his most important achievements.

The comic tone came early and apparently easily. Though relegated to the notes in this volume, "Mending Sump," Koch's parody of Frost, is hilarious. It was meaning, not tone, that gave Koch trouble, and even this difficulty was the result of programmatic concerns. In a statement published in Donald Allen's *The New American Poetry*, Koch traced his early obscurity to its origin in his first European stay:

*My first year in France had a huge effect on my poetry. . . ; since I didn't reach French very well yet but managed to be very excited by French poetry anyway, I began to get the same incomprehensible excitement into my own work. It wasn't an attempt to be obscure (I hate obscurity) but to recreate an excitement I had felt. My poetry was very much like a foreign language for about a year and a half after that.*

Bill Zavatsky, two sheets to the wind, once insisted to me that Koch was the father (or to blame, same thing) of the L = A = N = G = U = A = G = E poets, and it's true that some of Koch's early 1950s stuff comes close:

*Mother farmhouse, residual axis,  
Please hear the mushroom phantom sweet  
Queer clear voice of the dog-sweets  
Left abandoned by a rigorous monster after. . .*  
— from "Farm Thoughts"

The breathless excitement of much of Koch's early work (like O'Hara's) can wear a bit thin after a while, making one feel that if the exclamation mark key on his typewriter had been disabled, he would have been unable to write poetry.

But Koch soon moved back to what he called a more "realistic" style, and he worked well in both free and structured modes. "Fresh Air" (1955), in free verse, was a marvelous riposte to the dreary academic poetry of the time, *Written by men with their eyes on the myth/and the Missus and the midterms*. And in *Ko*, Koch took ottava rima, a form that goes back to Ariosto and Tasso and played his own riffs on it. Byron's *Don Juan* was a more recent influence and an important one. Byron showed Koch that, to use Auden's words, *the very qualities which make ottava rima*

*unsuited in English to serious poetry make it an ideal comic vehicle*. The structure permits Koch to pad without shame, to constantly digress from the narrative (which is peopled by a large cast of characters involved in at least four subplots), and to make outrageous rhymes, many of them trisyllabic. It is difficult to quote a couple of stanzas at random, for, unlike Byron, Koch seldom ends his sentence at the end of a stanza but carries it on to the next.

*Meanwhile in Kansas there was taking place  
A great upheaval. High school girls refused  
To wear their clothes to school, and every  
place  
In Kansas male observers were amused  
To see the naked girls, who, lacking grace,  
Were young, with bodies time had not  
abused,  
And therefore made the wheatfields fresher  
areas  
And streets and barns as well. No matter  
where he is*

*A man is cheered to see a naked girl —  
Milking a cow or standing in a streetcar,  
Opening a filing cabinet, brushing a curl  
Back from her eyes while driving in a neat  
car  
Through Wichita in summer — like the pearl  
Inside the oyster, she makes it a complete car.  
And there were many sermons on the subject,  
And autoists, come in to have the hub  
checked*

*On their old car, would stand and pass the  
day  
with talking of the various breasts and waists  
They'd seen throughout the week. . . .*

Koch's short poems, while never without merit, are to my taste seldom completely satisfactory. I can't think of a single short poem of his that has the concision and lyric grace of, say, O'Hara's *The Day Lady Died*. Koch needs at least a couple of pages to get going; he needs space to spread his wings. His strength comes in cumulative effect, and in the marvelous poems of the 1960s and early 1970s, he achieves a voice that is both lyrical and deadpan, as in these lines from *Some General Instructions*, lines worthy to be read aloud by Buster Keaton:

*Low-slung  
Buildings are sometimes dangerous to walk  
in and  
Out of. A building should be at least one foot  
and a half  
Above one's height, so that if one leaps  
In surprise or joy or fear, one's head will not  
be injured.  
Very high ceilings such as those in Gothic  
Churches are excellent for giving a spiritual  
feeling.  
Low roofs make one feel like a mole in gener-  
al. But  
Smallish rooms can be cozy. Many tiny people  
In a little room make an amusing sight. Large*



Persons, both male and female, are best seen out of doors.

Persons who complain about the pre-dominance of the lyric in contemporary poetry to the neglect of other forms have simply not read Koch. This volume contains narrative and epic (well, mock-epic) poetry, travelogue, and a poetic treatise on the art of love, a treatise which, like the **Kama Sutra**, would prove interesting and dangerous if practiced literally.

A surprise to those who, like me, thought of Koch as someone who substitutes wit for emotional depths will be *To Marina*, a ten-page memoir in middle age of an affair of Koch's late 20s. I was surprised to find that Koch can be as "confessional" as Lowell or Berryman:

*I wasn't ready*

*For you.*

*I understood nothing*

*Seemingly except my feelings*

*You were whirling*

*In your life*

*I was keeping*

*Everything in my head*

*An artist friend's apartment*

*Five flights up the*

*Lower East Side nineteen*

*Fifty-something I don't know*

*What we made love the first time I*

*Almost died I had never felt*

*That way it was like being stamped on in Hell*

*It was roses of Heaven*

*My friends seemed turned to me to empty shell*

*To Marina*, however, is as naked as Koch gets. The last poems in **On the Great Atlantic Rainway** show him bemused, quieter, though still able to spit puns and split logic with the best of them. On the whole, I think it gives ample evidence that Koch has lived up to the strictures he set for poets in *The Art of Poetry*:

*Remember your obligation is to write*

*And, in writing, to be serious without being solemn,*

*fresh without being cold,*

*To be inclusive without being asinine, particular*

*Without being picky, feminine without being effeminate,*

*Masculine without being brutish, human while keeping all the animal graces*

*You had inside the womb, and beast-like without being inhuman.*

*Let your language be delectable always, and fresh and true.*

— Reagan Upshaw

**Muse & Drudge** by Harryette Mullen  
Singing Horse Press (Philadelphia, 1995); 80 pages, \$12.50.

*you've had my thrills  
a reefer a tub of gin  
don't mess with me I'm evil  
I'm in your sin*

*clipped bird eclipsed moon  
soon no memory of you  
no drive or desire survives  
you flutter invisible still*

Harryette Mullen's first book **Trimnings** is a celebration and exploration of femininity as something extra. In her new book length poem, **Muse & Drudge**, a sequence of eighty, four quatrains each, the speaker calls on poetic wordplay and improvisation to rhythmically stave off an aching lack and heal a wound.

*Sapphire's lyre styles*. In the first few lines, Mullen invokes the history of Sappho whose poems we know only through fragments. Like Sappho, Mullen focuses on details of everyday life and the agonies of love, while keeping close to speech. Unlike Sappho, she accentuates the many voices that make up the one. And while Sappho's poems have been mutilated with the passage of time, Mullen's poem comes into being only through purposefully gathering and transforming fragments. And Mullen's Sappho is instead a Sapphire. Clarence Major's dictionary describes, *Sapphire* as a derogatory term for an unpopular black female. Sapphire surely also alludes to the contemporary poet who *dives into the mutilation that society makes black women go through (Angry Women)*. A sapphire is also a beautiful blue stone.

Mullen's uncommon, uncertain and shifting subject is a woman who in the blues tradition has been forgotten, oppressed and betrayed. Sapphire becomes traveling Jane who merges with other mothers, the essence lady; self-made woman, off bottom woman, brown gals, women of honey, hens, the bird, handsome gal, tomboy girl, a wave goodbye a girl, big legged gal, sassy cook, outlaws, etc. By slinging insults and studying the world around her and before her, she transforms her loss into lines that unravel, re-form and trick the reader. Each riddle-like poem has a secret that opens into another and I too become uneven, unbalanced, aching with pain and revenge, like traveling Jane herself. What does one do with an impossible mourning? She writes beautiful *ruses of the lunatic muse*:

*dark-eyed flower  
knuckling under  
lift a finger for her  
give the lady a hand*

*not her hard life  
cramped hot stages  
only her approach  
ahead of the beat*

*live in easy virtue  
where days behaving send  
her dance and her body  
forward to a new air dress*

*a pad for writing  
where dreams hit el cielo  
crack the plaster fool mood rising  
it's snowing on the radio (20)*

The betrayed woman doesn't sit still and weep. She keeps on moving *rumba with the chains removed*; for her, there is *no time to settle down*; she's *going back native natural country wild briars*; *shake it down south to New Orleans*; the French quarter; the city streets, buses and subways of Philmeyerok; to *Virginia/where the green grass grows*; coastal Georgia and South Carolina; the slave ships; *bamboula back to/the motherland*; Dahomey; Nigeria; Ashanti; Ethiopia; Cuba. She travels through social bedlam, a history of slavery and drudgery and looks into these places and times for wisdom and *freedom to study her story*.

*sister mystery listens  
helps souls in misery  
get to the square root  
of evil and render it moot (28)*

The sun may be shining but what does one do to take away the hurt. She *sings scat logic*, dances with her words, twisting up her tongue; she recasts, ridicules and rethinks the language of technology, advertising and religion. *Jesus is my airplane/I shall feel no turbulence/though I fly in a squall thorough the spleen of Satan*. She has a sexy celebration, but the body's raw and real: *copulation from scratch/kisses go down hard*. Ravaged by love's loss and the sense that *something must need fixin*, she finds a *women's shelter under a sweater*; she talks to herself, tells stories of others; speaks to the betrayer who now resides within and hurls insults and threats. She lets the *Mississippi rip, just exercising/her right to bare attitude: mister arty martyr/a jackass to water; his penis flightier than his word; kiss my black bottom; and then she begs someone to please come in/tell me what's good/think up something*.

*if I can't have love  
I'll take sunshine  
if I'm too plain for champagne  
I'll go float on red wine*

*what you can do  
is what women do  
I know you know  
what I mean, don't you*

Yes, I do. She tries to make excuses: *he couldn't help himself/he couldn't help it/he couldn't stop himself* but ends blessing stunned cattle, spavined horses, and gutted trout. She uses poetic language to move from one invisible flutter to another beginning. Some poems are thick and layered with double, triple, and quadruple meaning—the sounds of pain, anger, revenge and forgiveness. *When memory is unforgiving/mute eloquence/of taciturn ghosts/wreaks havoc on the living (71)*.

*feed the spirits or they'll  
chew on your soul  
you'll be swallowed and digested  
by a riled-up crocodile (69)*



*Muse & Drudge* is a book length poem in which Harryette Mullen gathers together fragments of a life and a history. She *hums some blues in technicolor*. It is a sad, funny, intelligent and powerful work.

—Barbara Henning

#### POEMS FOR THE MILLENNIUM

#### *The University of California Book of Modern and Postmodern Poetry Volume One: From Fin-de-Siècle to Negritude*

Edited by Jerome Rothenberg and Pierre Joris, University of California Press (Berkeley, 1995); 811 pages.

In the past, Jerome Rothenberg has taught us the methodological importance of anthologies. The Classical age, and its later-day adherents, preserved poetry similarly, for pedagogical purposes (*The Greek Anthology* comes to mind), but never as an iconoclastic gesture or for the revelation of a secret that no one had the interest or courage to uncover, or the possibility of uncovering, before — in Rothenberg's latest collection, *Poems for the Millennium*, which he has co-edited with Pierre Joris, it is both this revelation, and much more seriously, a mutation in the natural dimension of Western culture: the end of history in the sense in which it is secretly implied by anthologies, but for which they are rarely capable of shouldering, because they come off as a means of preservation and retro-

spection. *Millennium* is that rare case, one which has no intention of preserving anything, because its impetus, announced clearly by its first poet, William Blake, is *To cast off the rotten rags of memory by Inspiration*. But it is also, according to Blake, a "Self-annihilation", despite the inevitable care-of-the-self that is exhibited in the pasture-like scan of such a centralizing text as *Millennium*. It is also, Whitman's "compost" and Dickinson's "loaded gun." Thus the die of postmodernism is cast, and with it, the jetty-like role of trying to define people as living beings whose crucial distinction from other species is language, uncovering a beginning only against the background of a life which itself began long before.

With succinct commentary after certain poems to position them in terms of both their influence on Twentieth Century literature and their relevancy in terms of this collection's vision of what precisely constitutes "the millennium," the text is user-friendly and far less unwieldy than it could be, and far more precise than any anthologies of recent memory that attempted anything similarly canonizing. Then again, *Millennium's* subject is so different, so vast, so oceanic, comparisons can only point to the hope that it will serve as a model for any future attempts. It is not just any translation of Lautrémont that appears, but the best one (Alexis Lykiard's). One gets a double dose of Mallarmé: an excerpt from *Le Livre* where those who thought "Language" poetry was merely a discontent of the late Twentieth century will find (circa 1890):

end  
conscience  
And sorrows +  
+  
street  
  
+  
childhood  
  
double  
their  
crowd +  
+ a crime sewer

as well as the entire text of Mallarmé's *Un Coup de dés*, a poem that works as every thought emits a throw of the dice — *Toute pensée émetin coup de dés* — an idea that both informs, inspires, and even undermines *Millennium*, in the sense that it makes every effort not to assert the authority that is usually associated with anthologies.

Literally and figuratively central to *Millennium* is its section on Dada. What is new to be learned about this movement is its anticipation of so much that was to follow. In this sense the book gets you to thinking about something as irrational as an inherent memory of language, and something less irrational, that Allen

Ginsberg and Bruce Andrews may have read Tristan Tzara:

howl howl howl howl howl howl howl  
howl howl howl howl howl howl howl  
howl howl howl howl howl howl howl  
howl howl howl howl howl howl howl  
howl howl howl howl howl howl howl  
howl howl howl howl howl howl howl  
howl howl howl howl howl howl howl  
howl howl howl howl howl howl howl  
howl howl howl howl howl howl howl

— from Tzara's *Dada Manifesto*  
on *Feeble & Bitter Love*

*Is poetry necessary? I know that those who shout loudest against it are actually preparing a comfortable perfection of it; they call it the Future Hygienic*

*People envisage the (ever-impending) annihilation of art. Here they are looking for a more art-like art. Hygiene becomes mygod mygod purity. Must we no longer believe in words? Since when do they express the contrary of what the organ that utters them thinks and wants?*

*Herein lies the great secret:*

*Thought is made in the mouth.*

*I still consider myself very likable.*

— from Tzara's *Dada Manifesto*  
on *Feeble & Bitter Love*

*Are you tired of your dog ignoring you? Tired of your dog running away from you? Air Force obedience training makes the difference. Tits lock horns. Enola Gay mere asset management. No evil Shahs live on*

— from Andrew's *I Don't have Any Paper So Shut Up (or, Social Romanticism)*

Clarifying the all important relationship between poets and painters that was crucial to Dada and its various legacies, *Millennium* includes facsimile reproductions of Dadaist collaborations, a marvelous excerpt from Max Ernst's *The Hundred Headless Woman*, and elsewhere, manuscripts of Dickinson and Blake. Such delights seem to appear where ever some additional elucidation would be useful. Thus is revealed the inspiring economy of this anthology and a clever and perhaps unconscious practice of what really made many the great poems of the Twentieth century so great — they were very well edited. Thus Pound's influence on the Twentieth Century via Imagism in cutting-out the inessential words, the fluff that still stagnates poetry to this day due to hopeless misunderstandings and ignorance of what language is. Similarly, no poet is included in *Millennium* whose work was not somehow revolutionary, that did not

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somehow contribute to a break in the routine of poetry in civilization as an organizational link between total obedience, knowledge of oneself, and confession to someone else; poetry as another pastorship of Christianity. A routine which survives to this day in many forms, which some poets will continue to work against, who would then be the descendants of *Millennium's* poets — more of whom will undoubtedly appear in Volume Two. But the word "somehow" in describing the measurable extent to which poetry can be interpreted as such a reaction against a *status quo* is the vague, ideological hinge that the editors have to grapple with. In certain cases, as with Laura Riding, for instance, the impetus seems forced. Riding's work was no doubt revolutionary, but not necessarily for the reasons that the syntactically spare and fragmentary *Elegy in a Spider's Web* suggests, a work which when read in the context of Riding's *oeuvre* is non-representative of her Shakespearean preoccupation with lyric as the *potentiality demonstrated in poetry as a difference from the ordinary*. Riding is admired as much for her ability to question poetry in a full lyric, as she is for her postmodern *renunciation of poetry*.

Rothenberg's previous anthologies, such as *Shaking the Pumpkin* and *Technicians of the Sacred*, bold and intuitive in their assimilations of non-western poetics, anticipated the advent of multiculturalism, but also stand out as examples of a far-reaching, anthropological impulse, since deconstructed out-of-existence, that sought to preserve an idea of cultural unity via Whitman and Chomsky: *language is one under its amazing diversities*. *Poems for the Millennium* harbors similar interests with apologies, disclaimers and the intoxicating effect of what is without a doubt the greatest collection of English (American) language translations ever assembled. Contributing to this phenomena are Ron Padgett's translations of Apollinaire and Mayakovsky, which finely reveal long implicit connections between these poets and the New York School. Compare these versions of the first line of Apollinaire's *Zone* (*A la fin tu es las de ce monde ancien*):

*You're tired of this old world at last*  
(Ron Padgett)

*You are weary at last of this ancient world* (Anne Hyde Greet)

*In the end you are weary of this ancient world* (Samuel Beckett)

Curious, besides the substitution of "old" for "ancient" and the use of abbreviation, is Padgett's deference to Clark Coolidge (*I drove through this old world this afternoon*) and Gerard Manley Hopkins via the "šprung rhythm" of the line. We get a thoroughly New York version of Apollinaire, in contrast to Greet's and Beckett's iambic moves, especially

Beckett's idiosyncratic working of "the end," decidedly different from what is understood as "at last" (a notion of *personal relief*) in its appreciation of narrative and its symbolic, *fin de siècle* specificity in its critique of narrative as a sophistication of language, an effete discourse. *Millennium's* translations proceed similarly as only translations can, with certain takes and versions whose production is rendered as transparently as possible and understood as essential to a demotic imperative. But the ubiquity of the translations reveal the inevitable problem of the poetry's relation to language itself, which seems easily dismissable given one of the fundamental strategies of the book: to make the work available to as many (English speaking) people as possible — there's a sense that this alone is hard enough to accomplish, how can one also be worried constantly about ideology and interpretation? It nonetheless proceeds in a totalizing fashion, one for which you are at once grateful for its power and realization in the sheer volume and exactitude of the collection, and ungrateful due to its artificiality and the necessary re-mythologization of the poet as priest/shaman/prophet that sacralizes language for shelter from a decaying world that has never and will never have any totalization or unity. The power of English as the international language of poetry is made to shore up against its ruins, so to speak. Again, out of this retrospection surfaces the repugnant idea that poetry is being rewritten to restore order or to become part of order, begging the question, what if language *isn't* one under its amazing diversities? and is it possible to read it as such, as infinite differences, measurable and immeasurable. *Millennium* has its own commentary, in this sense, with its inclusion of sound-poetry by Kurt Schwitters and others (untranslated, of course):

Lanke trr gll  
pe pe pe pe pe  
Ooka ooka ooka ooka

Lanke trr gll  
pii pii pii pii pii  
Züüka züüka züüka züüka  
— from Schwitters, *Ur Sonata*

In defense of translation, *Millennium* offers the best, underscoring the necessity of English-speaking poets to get out of their language and work with others, and in the case of sound-poems, to get out of their language in order to get in it. In critique of translation, *Tablet V* by Armand Schwerner is included, where the level of the original is that which is closest to the poet as the *scholar-translator* of his own lines, lines which have never before been spoken or are in the process of disintegration and renewal through their own endless repetition.

*Poems for the Millennium* has its political unconscious as well. Particularly amus-

ing is the inclusion/non-inclusion of T.S. Eliot's "much anthologized" *The Waste Land* — the poem is listed in the table of contents, but is missing from the text due to its easy availability. Under Eliot's name there appears nothing but commentary (one wonders whether *Howl* will receive similar treatment in Volume Two). This lacunae is at once a testimony to the lasting, ubiquitous influence of this particular work, and a great opportunity for the editors to include sizable sections from the lesser-published works of other American poets, like George Oppen and Charles Reznikoff, as well as a generous sampling of Negritude and Asian poets. The treatment of Eliot and the exclusion of other influential (and arguably revolutionary) English poets like Auden and Hardy, makes possible the inclusion of scores of poets, too lengthy to list here, who are now, thanks to *Millennium*, consigned to less obscurity.

One of the pleasures of reading *Millennium* is to follow the tracing of certain veins underneath its encyclopedic structure and commentaries, veins that are only visible through the juxtaposition, progression and accumulation of the different works and poets. In other words, included are not only the great poets and the most important poets, but those who were telling the truth at their time, those who are on the map to serve as locales for others. The succession of Dino Campana, Fernando Pessoa and Ezra Pound, in that order, in the book's "First Gallery" suggests and prefigures the advent of fascism in Europe. There is both a weight and *wait* to Campana's "Zarusthustrian intoxication", like the augury of these lines from *Genoa: The slow uncertain songs in the veins of the Mediterranean city: / For the night was thick and deep. / While you Sicilian, from the hollow / Windows were enclosed / Up to your nipples in shadow / In a grim game / Of hollow shadow and flickering light / O Sicilian, / Octopus of the Mediterranean nights*. Then, from Pessoa's "Maritime Ode": *Damn it all for not being able to act out my madness! / Damn it all for always traipsing around, tied to the apron strings of civilization! / And going around burdened with my douceaur des moeurs, like a load of lace on my back! / Hangers-on — that we all are — of modern humanitarianism! / Consumptives, neurasthenics, lymphatics in our languors. / Lacking the nerve to be bold and violent men, / With a soul like a chicken caught by its leg!*

Writing under four different identities with different pen names, Pessoa is an oblique introduction to the deliberate use of identity as a subterfuge in the vision of man's fate and his relationship to the European State which was seething with dramatic oppositions whereby he could play out his destiny, also prefigured here, and elsewhere in *Millennium* with the inclusion of Lautrémont and Artaud, is an obsession with madness which came to be the rubric



through which the Twentieth Century has viewed itself as the culmination, an idea that has been both illuminating (in the case of Foucault), and tiresome as any abstract reflection of people that renders them incapable of controlling themselves and their world. Pound rounds-out the group, replaying the *Odyssey* in that same sense, as with Campana and Pessoa, of identifying with the Mediterranean, down to its very *material*, its formal language, its water, in *Canto One*, but differently from his European counterparts as only an American genius could, freshly re-visioning the European culture that so many artists were trying to move-on from. Pound took his identification with literature seriously and reacted to those who didn't, even if part of this meant *acting out his madness*.

In this way, due to the precision of its genealogical/historical structure, **Millennium** works like a hyper-text, one could randomly pick two or three poets and explore their associations on the map provided. Thus **Millennium** could work well on CD-ROM, but one becomes conscious again of how important and essential *the book* is, especially one which concludes with Jabès' *Le Livre des questions* (**The Book of Questions**):

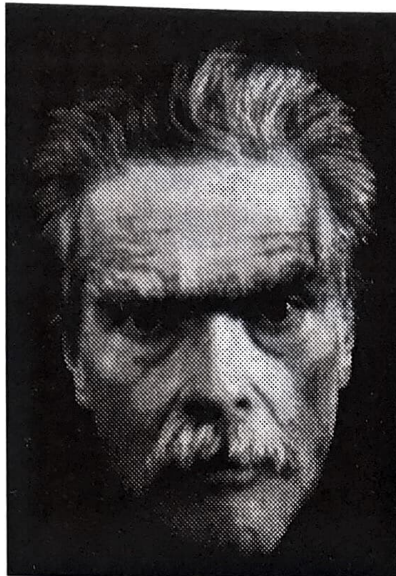
To be able to say: "I am in the book. The book is my world, my country, my roof and my riddle. The book is my breast and my rest." [...]

A notion of priority, perhaps the highest in **Millennium**, is clearly established in the circular reference to "the book," beginning with Mallarmé and ending with Jabès, in it we witness, as Derrida points out in his essay on Jabès, that *Life negates itself in literature only that it may survive better. So that it may be better. It does not negate itself any more than it affirms itself: it differs from itself, defers itself, and writes itself as différence. Books are always books of life (the archetype would be the Book of Life kept by the God of the Jews) or of an afterlife (the archetype would be the Books of the Dead kept by the Egyptians). Millennium* is then another archetypal book, kept by the poets, of both their life and afterlife.

—Robert V. Hale

**Red Actions: Selected Poems 1960 - 1993**, by Robert Kelly, Black Sparrow Press (Santa Rosa, 1995); \$24.95.

There is a more or less fastidious public ritual poets submit to at some point in their careers, called publishing the *Selected Poems*. Robert Kelly waited a long time before submitting, probably because he has always been more interested in the writing under hand, the poem to be written today, than in past achievement. A massive achievement it is, as chronicled in **Red Actions: Selected Poems 1960 - 1993**, a book spanning 33 years of work, a Dantean number to be sure. For anyone



Robert Kelly

acquainted with Kelly's work, the concept of a *summa poetica* is a tantalizing idea but also a seeming impossibility; for anyone unacquainted with the breadth of the work, it is a seeming necessity. Thinking about such a book immediately suggests two major hurdles that need to be overcome for the project to succeed.

First off, there is Kelly's early decision to *write everything*, to write every day in order to find *the shape of that day*, which gives a processual dynamics of continuity to the work, suggesting or even demanding a reading of that order — i.e. an extensive reading in order to get to the true intensity of the life-work. As he says in **The Loom**: *La verite/is day by day*. The counter argument is clear: the individual books he has published over the years are in fact already selections from the much vaster store of daily writing, and thus his own publishing practice gives him — and us — permission to take a *Selected* at (some kind of) face value. But the question remains: does this two-fold distillation give us the final, refined, pure extract or does it just shake off the *dirt dangling from the roots* and thus falsify a process essential to this poet?

The problem is starkly specific to the man's output over the years: how to select from 46 volumes behind which stand thousands of pages of work? In 1982, in one of the all-too-few acts of intense attention this work has so far been subjected to, Jed Rasula estimated that the total published output up to that time came to some 3000 pages of published poetry (not to mention some 750 pages of various prose publications). This amount culled from what Rasula estimates "conservatively" to be, for the same period, some 30,000 pages of typescript poetry! Nor is there a hint that in the ensuing 15 years this level of production has fallen off in any way, leading to the conclusion that the 400 pages of **Red Actions** were culled from some 40,000 pages of writing. Considering such an order of magnitude, does the aim of a *Selected*,

which is always bound to play on some notion of "representativeness," stand any chance of being fulfilled?

Secondly, a *Selected* is most appropriate when the core of the poet's work consists of short, more or less independent and self-contained lyrical poems, from which the poet is willing/able to cull the best exempla to make up the personal anthology such a book is. This method presupposes a belief in the individual poem as singular, autonomous "masterpiece." But in Kelly's case, not only is there an implicit rejection — as in many other of the major "Post"-modern poets — of the concept of the poem as instance of the masterpiece and its implied correlative of the other poems are somehow inferior, mere dross to be shed when the time of accounting has come, but there is furthermore a strong sense that the long poem — of which he has written many — is central to his project. How does one deal with poems that are processes of several hundred pages?

So much for this *introibo* of difficulties, mine obviously more than Kelly's — for the latter has cheerfully given us a hefty *Selected* in which these problems have been evacuated or resolved. Given these *caveats*, what of **Red Actions**? A slew of culinary metaphors — not something Kelly and his great appetite for all things of this world would object to, I believe — came first to mind: No, it's not a *smorgasbord*, if that term describes a somewhat confused and confusing medley of things; nor is it an *antipasto*, *hors d'oeuvres* — out-takes of the work, a manifold of appetizers selected from the full menu of possibilities. That would leave one on one's hunger, something **Red Actions** doesn't do. Best then, to play the metaphor to the hilt and savor the book as a *menu de degustation*, the chef's own choice, where the consumer refuses to choose, allowing the chef himself to show his dexterity and art by presenting a vast meal including numerous small-portion versions chosen from all the formal categories that encompass the art: *hors d'oeuvres*, *entrees* and *postres*.

But these metaphors won't do either, poetry is not just food for the intellect, though it be that, too; it is something more than a consumable quantity of which you partake until your appetite wanes. *A poem*, Kelly says somewhere, *any poem, is a deed for writer and reader alike. It is a shared dromenon, a workspace of more than mental and more than emotional activity: the movements of the eye, guided and inhibited by syntax, by space, by the look of silence, commit our bodies also to apprehension, the great alignment*.

The poem, and by extension the whole field of the work, can be seen as a process of alignment, i.e. as orientation. And this book, too, is best seen as such a possible sense of orientation — a map of possibilities and realizations for the reader here, new to, or only partially acquainted with, the *oeuvre*. In 1972, already suspecting that



the work's massiveness demanded some such orienting model, I had suggested the necessity for what I then called "A Primer for the Gradual Understanding of Robert Kelly." **Red Actions** can, I believe, best be seen as such an introduction or orientation.

The construction of the book is relatively straightforward. Kelly proceeds chronologically, selecting poems from his already published books from **Armed Descent** (1961) to **A Strange Market** (1992), while appending a 65-page selection of poems from 1991 to 1993. The only titles not represented here are **Enstacy**, **Weeks**, **A California Journal**, **The Cruise of the Pnyx**, and his most recent book-length poem, *Mont Blanc*. He includes the seminal poems *The Alchemist*, *Hui-neng Chops Bamboo*, and *In June*, collected in the Rasula-edited **The Alchemist to Mercury** (North Atlantic, 1981), and here restores them to their original chronological order. (This latter book remains an indispensable "alternate opus" to be read as a companion volume to **Red Actions**, especially as it provides a range of middle-length and serial poems impossible to include in the present book.) Kelly further provides a useful ten page section of *Devotions & Permissions*, i.e. notes on some of the included poems.

The book is thus not the easy temptation it could have been, i.e. a *Selected Shorter Poems*, but rather an attempt to show the whole breadth of the *oeuvre* by including selections from the long poems, most importantly from the long out-of-print **Axon Dendron Tree** (1967), and from what may be his finest achievement to date in that mode, **The Loom** (1975). Such inclusiveness arises from Kelly's willingness to present poems by partial selections only — and not just in the obvious case of the long poems but also in that of the shorter ones. The two sections of **The Loom** presented are in fact parts of parts: 3 pages from the 22-page third section and four from the 7-page 12th section. And yet Kelly manages in those two short outtakes to present the two crucial aspects, what I consider the propelling tensions of the book: the transformative narrative of image and the prospective-reflective meditation on formal concerns regarding both poem and life, thus clarifying the poem's intention and enabling a reading of the whole less likely to lose itself in the work's sheer overwhelming richness. Middle-length works are either shortened (thus *The Book of Hagar*, here renamed *The Book of the Running Woman* from **Flesh Dream Book**, is reduced to its first two sections) or given whole, as is the case for *A Constant Telling of the Father and His Widdershins* from the same volume.

Kelly's concerns have not wavered over time, and his comment on the title of the just cited 1971 collection still holds, setting the priorities straight, as he puts it: "The title **Flesh Dream Book** identifies the three great sources of human information: the flesh of sensory experience, dream and 24 poetry project newsletter

vision, and the holy book of tradition and learning, shared through time." This steadfastness of concerns has taken on a myriad shapes over and in time, and one of the successes of **Red Actions** is how the book makes the reader aware of these formal experiments, from the sharp image-based ("deep image" is how he and a few others talked about it back then) 13 syllable (a 5-3-5 pattern) *Lunes* to the highly complex informational mappings of later poems such as *Men Sleeping*. Or the different shape and feel of those poems arising from what elsewhere he has called a *ta'wil of the first line*, for example the poem starting on page 344, arising from its title, the Tibetan character (the last of that alphabet) pronounced [AH], as against, say, *Sentence*, his experiment with polysyntax, *the permission to take any or every word or phrase as linkable with what comes before, or with what comes after, or as capable of bearing meaning while standing alone*.

Although the work's vastness and its constant return to those basic themes — love, vision and language — is likely to hide this variety of means somewhat, Kelly, like others of his generation — Mac Low, Rothenberg or Antin, say, and more so than poets like Ashbery or Eshleman — has been an endlessly fertile formal innovator and experimenter. The book accurately maps these investigations and while there is no introduction to ease the inexperienced reader's difficulties, there are enough programmatic poems in the book for the reader to gain access to Kelly's poetics, with foremost among these, *Prefix: Finding the Measure, Against the Code, Sonata in A-flat: The Essay on Form* from **The Loom**, and *Ode to Language*.

To conclude let me say the pleasure I hope **Red Actions** will be for those who through this book will come to discover an *oeuvre* without which the second half of this century would lack the American shape and depth it does have. May the book also have the effect all good *Selected Poems* should have, namely to send the readers back to the books from which these selections are culled — or, pious hope, forward to some Pleiade-like *Collected Works*, in as many volumes as it will take to get it all down.

—Pierre Joris

**Common Preludes** by Edward Barrett, The Groundwater Press (Port Washington, 1994); 71 pages, \$10.00.

This is an exhilarating book by a poet just about unknown outside the Boston area (excepting a few poets in New York) and published by a tiny, admirable press. It deserves to be known by everybody. Meditations of a particularly wide-ranging (and detecting) sort, Edward Barrett's **Common Preludes** are common in their determined focus on daily experience — rather than aspiring, say, to the condition of music. In many other aspects they are rare.

Perversely, I want to call Barrett's work "language poetry," when I know quite well it has virtually nothing in common with the writing that goes by that name. In fact, his poems — in both prose and lines — are highly personal (though they expand to become genuinely philosophical and ramify to include large public chunks of the world); "narrative"; brimming with feeling; more often than not formed in some sense (sequences, cadences, openings, closures, syntax, etc.). But they are also *of, for* and mysteriously, *by* language itself, which pours forth without stopping (or would if not for the poet's skill in breaking the flow), as though what experience *is*, not to speak of what it may mean, is determined by the language it gives rise to continuously.

That is to say — though how, exactly, remains unclear to me — experience, at least in Barrett's experience, demands to be written about, or it is not. This is the feeling I get in reading these complex poems celebrating the complexities of daily life. Language is on display, but display isn't its function any more than mere recording is. It is more a matter of experience being constituted, at least in large part, by words. Strikingly, *saying* — what should be said, what must be said, what could be said and to whom — is central: *I was saying... There isn't much to say about.. Do you want to say so much?* A beautiful evening scene has snow changing from the color of one envelope (i.e. language-holder) to that of another. Two girls say something arresting about a third, and the remark produces and is reproduced in a poem. *It was like a whisper... Writing glosses on the violet-blue text of seeming*. The poet is somehow the necessary correspondent.

In reality, Barrett is much closer to qualifying as a New York poet, who happens to live and write in New England (and to have a part of his heart in Ireland). Ashbery can be glimpsed behind a tone, or in a question that leaves some puzzlement or perception suspended. One poem is dedicated to Schuyler. The sense of intimacy between poet and reader — who is often the silent participant in a dialogue — evokes O'Hara.

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But Barrett has his own voice and his own concerns. His feeling for place is especially striking, spots of time relating to Brooklyn or Vermont or the west coast of Ireland; certain slants and shades of light and dark (I discern nocturnes here as well as preludes, also much in the way of impromptu and rhapsody); what stores used to be where; the things a drugstore sold. Barrett's down-to-earth intellectuality, lyricism and wit — *Everyone — please—remain calm; take off your wings... The important desires are forlornly crazy...* — resonate through the book.

Although about half the poems are in lines, prose poems seem to be where Barrett's real sensibility lies. His unit is the paragraph, whether in verse or prose. The poems in lines have a prose music. I'm tempted to call it the music of intelligence, as one might say of Wallace Stevens — keeping in mind that Stevens is far less earthy, less conversational, more cerebral (necessary angel vs. necessary correspondent).

There are obvious risks when a poet is as fluent as Barrett; yet rarely does the gift for gab take control of a poem rather than the other way around. Mostly the poems convince us that they travel as they do because they are required to do so: chasing down leads, separating nuances, springing sideways in CD Rom fashion, providing their own connective tissue. *There's this momentum we follow toward what is not in the world and there's no turning back, counting one after the other, translating effects into causes, translating not ignorance but expectation into understanding, regret, exhilaration.*

— Charles North

**Mao & Matisse** by Ed Friedman, Hanging Loose Press (Brooklyn, 1995); 93 pages, \$12.00.

There are books one is glad to have on the shelf when the outside world's news darken the skies inside the cabeza. For this writer, Ed Friedman's **Humans Work** (Helpful Book, 1988) has long been one of those libros. And whenever vapors of Gibran or Bly or one of Rumi's innumerable translators threaten to invade workshop discourse, I exorcise them with the *Translate into Arabic sequence — e.g., Prophecy*:

*A pair of dark eyes watch me through a bullet hole in the cantina.*

*I know it's the Prophet himself in a \$50 black stetson.*

*HOW do I know? Heh heh heh.*

*I feel mighty fine.*

Now **Mao & Matisse** joins its predecessor on that shelf, and it is likewise a joy. Ron Padgett's blurb is one of the sharpest recent examples of the mini-essayistic form:

*It's as if the poems ... were written by several people whose second language is a*

*floaty, slightly dislocated, and thoroughly amusing English, from which there emerges a new lyricism that provides a rarity these days: pure pleasure.*

By all ye gods and demons, we can use that! In mega-doses! As an antidote to both media spew and the product of practitioners who try very hard to sound either 1) like just one and indivisible marvelously 'integrated' 'person' or 2) like the recipient of a genetically enhanced insect brain transplant. Master of notes and tones, Ed pleases the inner (*Etonnez-moi!*) Diaghilev:

*(...) You appraise me with blue vacant eyes*

*very shallow, very wide*

*Nothing stands still for two-toned shirts*

*That mirror the design of your car radio*

*Why even my well-practiced blank expression*

*Dissolves at the mention of fresh grazing*

*I am Mr. Cow now and Mrs. Free-swimming Jellyfish*

*Undulating across the tangerine linoleum*

*Petroglyphs verify our continued grooming*

Some of the shorter poems bring to mind Blaise Cendrars' great **Kodak** or **Elastic** works:

*The Strongman Act*

*Six coding stations with pre-distributors*

*Relay a response*

*To the mother of my children*

*Say you all know*

*Without reserve*

*As often as necessary*

*Well-chosen anecdotes*

*Enhance theory and*

*Develop a fully cultured acumen*

The longer ones (*Living Under*, *November*, *Presence*) proceed in an open form syntax that manifests delight in thought, perception, and the next-to-each-otherness of words:

*Mariachi on a mule negotiates boulders and cacti.*

*A melodious tune circle spins in the vista.*

*Hasta la vista.*

*Vive la France!*

(*Living Under*)

Shifting and swerving through the mind's traffic, Ed Friedman's works reflect a poetics of hope: Hope for the idiom's ability to cope; hope for the continuous hope of humans through their perennially terrifying and hilarious environment; hope for others out there to stop moping and

start troping in similar keys.

There is some evidence of the existence of some younger ones 'out there' working to restore a non-insectoid sense of humor to American poetry, in the great (non-provincial) New York School tradition: Kevin Opstedal of San Francisco and Joel Daily of New Orleans come to mind. The Establishment (yes, Virginia, we do have one in these States) will of course go on ignoring anything that seems the least bit fun, always preferring a Paul Muldoon's bleakly twisted and overdetermined 'wit' to Ted, or Anselm, or Edmund Berrigan's genuine article. Or to this lovely work, Ed Friedman's **Mao & Matisse**. I notice that I have started making a short list for an anthology: What to call it? So many of the poems in our recent mudslide of anthologies of contemporary versos are dismally humorless. Perhaps *The Blown Ones*, the title of the book's final (prose) poem, would serve as a title, and Ed should be the Ed.:

*(...) Write about us in those impressive alphabets designed during the period of Russian Constructivism. Busby Berkeley will provide movement, a waterfall, a bride, telephone operators at their switchboards. There's a collection here forming. Notice the ducks.*

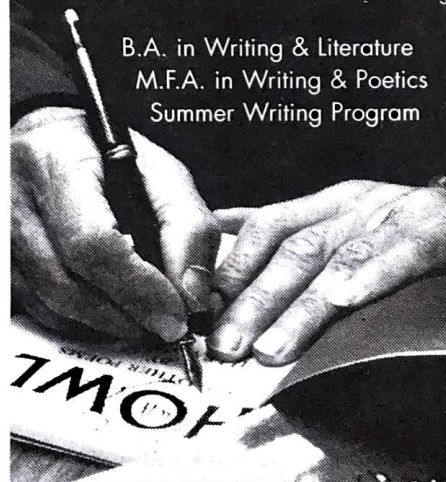
—Anselm Hollo

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**Asia & Haiti** by Will Alexander, Sun & Moon Press (Los Angeles, 1995); 138 pages, \$11.95.

Will Alexander's new book, *Asia & Haiti*, is itself unsettling in form and content. The book is divided into two long sections, *Asia* and *Haiti* (yes, exactly like the title), a structure which reflects the spiritual conflicts depicted within. In an incantation and a declaration of a spiritual/religious war, Alexander uses the voices of *rebellious Buddhist monks who hover in invisibility, vertically exiled, in an impalpable spheroid, virescently tinged* to narrate the first section, and *Les Morts* (the dead) of Haiti to narrate the second. These collective personae tell of wars against the Chinese occupation of Tibet and the suppression of the Buddhist religion, and against Francois and Simone Duvalier, and their distortion and misuse (mild words) of the Voudoun religion during their reign in Haiti.

A narrative flow doesn't exist here; instead, both sections are written in a strangely repetitive style which is not in any way (and here I have to disagree with the back cover blurb) a *tornado of language*. While the language is illogical (a word I am using in the most complimentary way), and somewhat reminiscent of Aime Cesaire's (to whom Alexander has been compared) extended sentence structure and opulent disjunctive word choices, it is also essentially cyclical. As Alexander soon makes clear, these spiritual wars are set in the astral realm and thus the language and images are ongoing and as motionless as eternity.

While there is some kind of eventual resolution for both *Les Morts* and the monks, there is no easy linear progression to their collective revenge. In *Asia*, the language echoes the disembodiment of the monks, floating above the earth. The monks struggle against Chinese communist bureaucracy and linearity, as well as insidious western individuality and external realism:

*we see  
the personal carved  
by scathing multiple divisions  
each body split off & lettered with  
burins  
with wayward perceptual sclerosis  
searching in its stupor  
for a nunnery of plankton  
for a process to seal its insights with  
coldness  
with partial turpentine mixed with  
seeming clarified mascara  
it seeks in itself to stay broken*

In *Haiti*, the struggle is between two interpretations of the same religion; however this clash also deals with the physical. While the monks are bodiless and ephemeral, moving through their own spiritual journey in language, *Les Morts* are concerned with blood, disease, and torture, from which they themselves died. For revenge, *Les Morts* force the Duvaliers, the 26 poetry project newsletter

*gargoyle couple*, into a grotesque and infinite sex act in a Promethean crushing of bones and infecting of blood. But it is the spiritual ostracism of Papa Doc from the *rada voodoo*, an old world voodoo *more concerned with beauty than with rage* that is the ultimate punishment for his religious transgressions:

*we've implanted your statis inside a  
blank & definite oration  
like a portfolio in abscess  
in this dimly shadowed gargoyle  
arraignment  
because we've weighed your auricles  
in response to riddled cadmium  
gauntlets  
because your mixtures have failed  
& will never know the haunts of higher  
watery confusion  
will never know an inkled a-priori  
or hear the bell that rings from the  
throne of a higher solar magnetics*

While I feel that today one of the most difficult tasks of the poet is to somehow reconcile politics with writing — it's hard not to feel that writing and politics are both inescapably connected and at perennial odds — *Asia & Haiti* shows that reconciliation can occur — that fusion and transcendence are possible. None of the subtleties and complexities of language, culture, geography and struggle are lost in a larger incantation of eternal clash between "good" and "evil," both entities appearing in myriad, changeable forms. What I found truly remarkable was the way Alexander conveyed the fresh anger and horror of *Les Morts* and the Tibetan monks while also exploring their nuances of words and philosophy, because perhaps it is in these subjective subtleties that spiritual redemption can be found.

There is so much to explore about *Asia & Haiti*, the ornate and tricky word choices (which keep one at a dictionary), the intricate expressions of two powerful religious/philosophical systems, spiritual wars which truly concern us all.

*the personal  
with its flameless singularity  
with motifs & other blindings of the a-  
clairvoyant 'Nihilists'  
of darkened stammering crystal  
before the one illusive judge across  
atomic infinity*

(Asia)

*we  
the refined oblation  
the precise double movement of rays  
like a blistered sketch of citron  
embroiled across blazing horizons*

*& in the less astral aspect  
we are bones engaged in deadly light-  
ning battles*

(Haiti)

—Marcella Durand

**Premonitions: The Kaya Anthology of New Asian North American Poetry**, edited by Walter K. Lew, Kaya (1995); 594 pages, \$22.95.

Unlike many anthologies that the multicultural movement has produced, *Premonitions* focuses on diversity of poetic style and approach over superficial "ethnic" diversity that is the focus of other anthologies. This is something of a breakthrough; for once, the editor of an anthology of poetry by minority Americans has understood the poem as a document that does more than "get the record straight," or tell new stories but in the same old ways. Walter K. Lew, the editor of *Premonitions*, who is an experimental poet (as the blurb on the back of the book states) writes in his afterward that he has chosen to include poetry in which language is drastically reshaped into fresh articulations beyond the confines of "conventional verse." Indeed, this is probably the first anthology of Asian American poetry in which John Yau doesn't appear to be the only poet included who writes in alienating, strange ways, as he does in Garret Hongo's *Open Boat* anthology of two years ago, or in the little-known *Chinese American Poetry: An Anthology*, published in 1991.

*Premonitions* opens with pages from Theresa Cha's graphic essay *Commentaire*. By beginning the anthology with Cha, an avant-garde filmmaker and video artist and the author of the often forbidding *Dictee*, Lew provides a brilliant grounding for a radical new identity for Asian American poets. Some pages of *Commentaire* contain no more than a handful of words, often written in script, or in white on a black background (like the placards in a silent film); others include a photograph of a brick wall, total whiteness framed by a black border (an empty movie screen), or a still from Carl Dreyer's *Vampyr*. The piece seems to be about the way a movie, understood deconstructively, draws one into its enclosed emptiness, "hushing" (a word from the piece) the viewer while at the same time providing - this is a silent film, like a silent page — a separate "commentary" to fill the space. The Canadian poet Roy Kiyooka, who died in 1994, follows Cha with a poem that is itself a short anthology. It is eighteen sections long, and each of its sections explores the theme, roughly about or around Hieronymous Bosch and *Hier* (as its title states), in ways that run from lyrical description to a spare "language" poetry. Section 6, a sub-poem entitled *meditations inside a Zealot's Hell*, contains the lines;

*The Landscape I'm most compelled by  
consists of a  
Seething Crustaceous Mass a riddled  
Plenum*

*I pluck the Garden-of-Delight & a*



*Season-in-Hell*  
Out of my abdomen. Nightmare becomes  
me.

There is something unsettling about Kiyooka's use of stock phrases like *Garden-of-Delight* and *Season-in-Hell*, and the writing seems strangely self-absorbed, while other parts of the poem, and the fractured structure of the whole, argue against this over-romanticized "I." Section 16 runs in its entirety:

child  
  
of  
syntactical  
leaps  
I stammer  
after  
your unbespoke  
smile  
your  
simian grief  
reeks  
an ancient

havoc.

The concise language and staccato rhythms are a clear contrast to Section 6, and yet one can still see the drama of Hieronymus Bosch's metamorphosis-run-wild in this brief, thoroughly indeterminate section.

The structure of *Premonitions* is similar to Cha's *Commentaire*, in that it includes fragments of poems printed on a black page to head each of its sections. It also resembles Kiyooka's poem, in that it contains poems that run the gamut from the lyrical to the experimental, and from narrative/confessional to collage/oblique "word-centered" modes. Lew compares, in the afterward, his idea of the anthology to Poe's concept of the long poem as a series of linked shorter ones, to *East Asian forms of multi-authored verse, or (in the oldest example) the Avatamsuka Sutra's metaphors of mutual interpenetration and inclusion*. He maintains the tensions that result in such a heterogeneous grouping by including the best of the various types of writing; in this way, he takes advantage of the peculiar situation of an anthology centered around ethnic difference to cross the various boundaries that exist in the United States and Canada between stylistic — often, but not always, as politicized — difference.

Arthur Sze's long poem, *Archipelago*, for example, is not nearly as experimental as Kiyooka's or Cha's work (or Myung Mi Kim's or John Yau's), and yet there is a richness to its language that permits it to exist peacefully, not in an ironized state, beside his contemporaries' more self-deconstructing work:

Men dressed in cottonwood leaves dance  
in the curving motion of a green rattlesnake.  
I feel I am walking along a sandstone

trail  
and stop in a field of shards: here is a  
teal zigzag  
and there is a blood-red deer's breath  
arrow.  
Women dancers offer melons to the six  
directions  
then throw them to the ground...

The Buddhist undercurrents of Sze's poem become more manifest in the last section of *Premonitions*, devoted to Buddhist work — by Russell Leong, Andrew Tang, and Patricia Y. Ikeda; indeed, Lew notes in his afterward that *Beneath a Single Moon*, the anthology of American Buddhist poetry, didn't contain a single Asian American poet among its forty-five. While *Premonitions* includes some uninspired work by well-known writers such as Jessica Hagedorn and David Mura, other poets, such as Al Robles, Marilyn Chin, Stephen Shu-ning Lui and Traise Yamamoto, provide a pleasant surprise for readers not familiar with Asian American poetry. Barry Masuda (born in 1972, one of the many good younger poets included) flicks through his cyber-speculative remote-control in his *Local Cyborg*:

words distend homicides  
Cindy Sherman hosts 24 blow fly pupa  
nestle in my decomposing eyes  
cannot see how passion's  
corpse preserved cryogenic culture  
wanders aimlessly through Ala Moana

Marilyn Chin provides a less hectic but no less irreverent panoramic vision of a cross-continental Romeo and Juliet in *Composed Near the Bay Bridge*:

Amerigo has his finger on the pulse of  
China.  
He, Amerigo, is dressed profoundly  
punk:  
Mohawk-pate, spiked dog collar, black  
leather thighs.  
She, China, freshly hennaed and boad, is  
intrigued  
with the new diaspora and the sexual  
freedom  
called bondage. "Isn't bondage, there-  
fore,  
a kind of freedom?" she asks, wanly.

While the informed reader might be nagged by the question, "Where's Mei-mei?" *Premonitions* manages to include everyone from the neglected Japanese American poet Lawson Inada (the Langston Hughes-meets-Guillame Apollinaire of Asian American poetry) to the experimental upstart (Hejinian-meets-Yau?) Tan Lin. It also includes entire sections devoted to gay and lesbian poetry, often providing representation to much writing — for instance by Willyce Kim, who hasn't published a book of poetry since 1976 — that has been neglected in the conservative trend of the past two decades. Rather than getting ship-

wrecked on identity politics, Lew and *Premonitions* maneuver skillfully through the many booby-traps and bureaucratic Sirens that mark the course of the editing of an anthology, and provide the reader with what is perhaps a milestone in American minority literature.

—Joy Liga

**The Little Magazine, Volume 21** (Albany, 1995); CD-ROM, \$

This issue of *The Little Magazine*, edited by Chris Funkhauser, Belle Gironde and Ben Henry, is a striking introduction to the possibilities of creating serious hypermedia literary art for CD-ROM. Perhaps there are other such artifacts in existence, but I have looked with some care at two current indexes of CD-ROMs "in print" and find nothing really comparable. I should say also that I have visited dozens of hypermedia art sites on the Web and have found there nothing remotely comparable in quality to the work in this latest issue of *The Little Magazine*. I realize that CD-ROM is technologically much more supple than Web html and graphics, but even given that fact, the distinction of *TLM* works is marked. Whether or not this collection of hypermedia works is groundbreaking, historic, etc. is, of course, a matter which will be decided in the future. My prediction is that *Volume 21* has made a place for itself in the chronicles of early hypermedia literary art. But that prediction is based much less on my knowledge of exactly what's going on in computer-produced hypermedia than on my sense of the inherent value of many of the works in the volume. So I'd like to turn now to some particular works.

There are over 50 works in *Volume 21*. Each of them deserves comment, but that would be tedious for readers, so I want to make some general remarks and then turn to a handful of works whose excellence and variety seem to me to illustrate the richness of this CD-ROM. What must be said, with all due respect to the contributors, is that most of the pieces here owe considerable debt to the editors, who in many cases were responsible for integration of media. To begin, then, there is a tremendous variety of artistic intentions and tonalities. Some works are very kinetic, some angry. Some are lyric, even elegiac. Some provide multiple opportunities for reader interaction. Others are artistically constraining. Some use all three media — text, graphics and sound. Some confine themselves to two. Sometimes the relationships among media are harmonious, illustrative. Sometimes there is dialectic or even an outright conflict. Generally, I found the graphics more powerful than text and sound. All in all I feel that the volume is consonant with Don Byrd's call (in the contextualizing after section) for the humane, visionary use of technology in art. I cannot say the same for the *Introduction/Invocation* eloquently read by Harvey Brown. It

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announces political intentions that don't seem to me characteristic of most of the work in the volume. But the key characteristics here are richness, variety and excellence.

Some comments on individual pieces.

Lori Anderson's *A Woman Eating a Grape* is one of those works in which graphics, text, and voice are integrated with terrific intensity. The single rotating symbolic painting by Angelina Marino does not become tedious because the painting grows in significance as the accompanying poem proceeds with its powerful exploration of who the fabulous female creature in the painting is and what she portends.

Another striking feminist piece is Susan Brenner's *Exquisite Corpse*, a triptych showing, each panel also in three parts, three versions of a dismembered drowned virgin, integrated with wondrously apt texts from Cixous, Irgaray, Shakespeare, and the artist herself. The piece is basically simple in construction but powerful in impact.

Trudy Morse and Don Archer's *fractal images* probably should not be considered a feminist piece, though a woman's voice recites fragments of a tale of lost connections and makes a harrowing keening that rises above the almost intolerable buzz of background noise as a single set of fractal images goes through an astounding series of transformations in texture and color. It is the kind of driven piece you want to escape but cannot get free of because it's as hypnotic as it is frightening.

Another piece is Geof Huth's curious *The Dreams of the Fisherwife*. The reader is presented with a strange runish-looking text made of ordinary English orthography but overtyped to produce talismanic characters. A voice recites these characters in a sort of Joycean intonation that seems remarkably true to the altered orthography. And yet, for all this artful distortion, the voice of the mother fisher wife comes out in portentous utterances that seem ancient and archetypal.

One work that does fulfill something of the ideological promise of Harvey Brown's invocation is Nathaniel Tarn and Chris Funkhauser's elegiac *Sunlight*, an elegant integration of text and photos (some shuttered and kinetic) about a sojourn in Guatemala.

The piece is perhaps more mythic than political, but the presence in it of the third world and its history of exploitation is powerfully palpable.

To conclude with an attractive miscellany. *Let the Motor Be Broken* by Meg Arthur and Stefan Said shows that the hypermedia form can be handsomely adapted to populist content, in this case an anti-industrial song with inviting graphics, though oddly the graphics portray a musician bowing a violin whereas the audio track sounds like a guitar or a banjo, plucked.

Tuli Kupferberg demonstrates that literary hypermedia can be genuinely funny in his untitled short series on the vacuity of purely formalistic and self-reflexive art.

Finally Lee Ann Brown's *Vibratory Ode* creates a highly artistic disturbance. The reader has no real control over the rapid changes of imagery or over the voice that recites relentlessly, a poem that is not exactly about those images but is somehow a consonant resymbolization of them. We can choose to see the text. And here is a revelation. We have tended to forget that poems are not only linguistic constructs, but also quasi-musical notations for oral presentation. This work reminds us of the essential musicality of language and of how that musicality even invades image, especially moving image.

Were you given the task of representing the richness of **Volume 21 of The Little Magazine**, you would choose a different set of exempla. You would find in them different things to emphasize. You would arrange them in different sets. **Volume 21** is not paginated. One enters where one chooses. Even within individual pieces the reader has choices. This art is truly interactive, as it is intermedia. Hours of pleasure, probing, and puzzling out await the reader of these works.

—Eugene K. Garber

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**Lapsus Linguae by Marcella Durand**, Situations Press (New York, 1995); 16 pages.

Language is leaking. There are leakages of intimacy behind these about the relation between the description tendency & the world of possible nocturnal word. The city is brewing up under. Only the silence of geography can move like this does. Wires and shadows upward moving love poems into the room of ominous light. Sightings of prehistoric landscapes sounding behind the eyelids.

Listen to the way this poem sounds, says her poem. Titles are interested in being deceptive. The soul radio is lowly on warm. Night crawlers can't be farmed here. Is this the city? The giant spectator wanders and wonders. This is the language spell under which lies are made of. The halo is putting together. Eat here these poems, but chew slowly, the flavor so palatable after a digestion period. A very good meal.

—Shannon Ketch



## BOOKS RECEIVED

Richard James Allen, **What to Name Your Baby**, Paperbark Press/Tasdance (Tasmania, 1995); 40 pages.

*Can I wear my new wig in heaven? Will I have big tits in heaven? Will I find a bra that fits in heaven? Do I have to shave under my armpits in heaven?*

Richard James Allen, **The Air Dolphin Brigade**, Paperbark Press/Shoestring Press (Tasmania/Nottingham, 1995); 88 pages, \$14.95.

*When I was born there was a terrible sadness upon the earth.*

Pat Andrus, **Old Woman of Irish Blood**, Open Hand Publications (Seattle, 1996); 80 pages, \$9.95.

Shapely poems of love & life; Celtic mysteries in the Pacific Northwest. Worth a looksee.

Ivan Arguelles, **Enigma & Variations: Paradise is Persian for Park**, Pantograph Press (Berkeley, 1995); 96 pages, \$8.95.

Extraordinary long poem including history (the Gulf War), myth, song & tirades. Enigma revives the idea of the long poem as information, nodding to Pound, but going way out beyond surrealism & the ideogram. Breathtaking! Highly Recommended.

Djuna Barnes, **Poe's Mother: Selected Drawings of Djuna Barnes**, edited by Douglas Messerli, Sun & Moon Press (Los Angeles, 1995); 233 pages, \$29.95.

Exquisite drawings (traces of Beardsley & Pamela Coleman Smith) accompanied by brief, informative notes by Messerli. Worth every penny of its reasonable price. Run out and pick this book up immediately!!! While it's still in print!!! Very Highly Recommended.

Jeffrey Beam, **Visions of Dame Kind**, The Jargon Society (Winston-Salem, 1995); 66 pages, \$12.50.

Sparse gem-like poems with equal dashes of wit & melancholy. Reminiscent of the best haiku's and late W.C. Williams. Highly Recommended.

Alberto Blanco, **Dawn of the Senses: Selected Poems**, Juvenal Acosta, ed., City Lights (San Francisco, 1995); 215 pages, \$12.95.

Remarkable selection of poems by one of Mexico's greatest poets, using 12 different translators, including John Oliver Simon, WS Merwin and Eliot Weinberger. If you aren't familiar with Blanco's work, this is the place to start. If you are, it's all gravy. Highly Recommended.

Eavan Boland, **An Origin Like Water: Collected Poems 1967 - 1987**, Norton (New York, 1996); 205 pages, \$25.00.

Collected poems by a major Irish poet, whose works are technically sound, if a bit conservative. Recommended.

Louis Daniel Brodsky, **Paper-Whites for Lady Jane: Poems of a Mid-Life Love Affair**, Time Being Books (St. Louis, 1995); 74 pages, \$12.50.

*Arteries and veins irrigate ancestral lands/long ago forgotten by us.*

Mary Burger, **Bleeding Optimist**, Xurban Press (Westminster, 1995); 92 pages, \$6.00.

Intense & ironic series focusing on the development & decline of a sexual relationship amidst O.J. & Oklahoma. Lucid, riveting. A must! Highly Recommended.

Howard Camner, **Bed of Nails**, Camelot Publications (Ormand Beach, 1995); 79 pages.

It's good to know that someone is keeping the neo-beat flames alive in Florida.

Neeli Cherkovski, **Animal**, Pantograph Press (Berkeley, 1996); 103 pages, \$8.95.

Lush & true, this collection may be his best yet. Deeply covers the ground from Blake's Tiger through Kosher kitchens to the North Beach scene, all the way to AIDS wards in fluorescent hospitals. Highly Recommended.

Maxine Chernoff, **American Heaven**, Coffee House Press (Minneapolis, 1996); 218 pages, \$21.95.

New novel from the author of **Bop, Plain Grief & Signs of Devorion**. Recommended.

Michael Coffey, **Elemenopy**, Sun & Moon (Los Angeles, 1996); 102 pages, \$10.95.

Dazzling collection of poems exhibiting a range uncommon these days. Coffey is equally at home with projective verse, lyric and prose poems. The book draws to a close with tributes to Gertrude Stein and Jackson Mac Low, using their techniques to his own ends. Highly Recommended.

Marcel Cohen, **The Peacock Emperor Moth**, translated by Cid Corman, Burning Deck (Providence, 1995); 106 pages, \$8.00.

*A man has known so many humiliations in his childhood that he has scruples about calling to his dog in too authoritarian a manner.*

**Comunicacion Promocional**, Banco De Ideas, Z (Havana, 1996); 7 folios.

Matt Corey, **Monolith**, Xurban Press (Westminster, 1995); 96 pages, \$6.00.

Poignant prose of the short variety. Recommended.

Alan Davies, **Sei Shonagon**, hole books (Ottawa, 1995); 33 pages.

Lovely lyric poems generated from Shonagon's writing, among other things. Davies keeps writing these beautiful poems. What a pleasure. Highly Recommended.

Jordan Davis, **A Little Gold Book**, Golden Books (New York, 1995); 16 pages, \$5.00.

Wow!. For those of you who haven't read Jordan Davis' work yet — do it now. You won't be disappointed. This is a lovely book, printed in the most unusual and pleasing way. The poems are delightful and true. Very Highly Recommended.

Patricia Dienstfrey, **The Woman Without Experiences**, Kelsey St. Press (Berkeley, 1995); 129 pages, \$12.00.

*slow cooking preserves tenderness.* How true. Recommended.

Dolly, **From Sad Beginnings to Happy Endings**, Vision Books Int'l (Santa Rosa, 1995); 215 pages, \$14.95.

How-to primer in verse, sort of in the inspirational literature category.

Mark Doty, **Heaven's Coast: A Memoir**, HarperCollins (New York, 1996); 305 pages, \$24.00.

Memoir of love & loss in this age of the plague. It comes highly recommended from folks we can trust. Recommended.

Kim Elizabeth, **Darkworld Vampires**, Millennium (St. Clair Shores, 1995); 36 pages, \$3.25.

Comic-book style vampire poetry, illustrated by ColleenDoran, Jae Lee, Derek Gross & others. Essential for vampire lovers everywhere.

Kenward Elmslie, **Champ Dust Spinoff: 10 Postcard Collages**, The Alternative Press (Ann Arbor, 1996); 10 postcards.

Write The Alternative Press at 1207 Henry St., Ann Arbor, Michigan, 48104. Do it now. Ask them for a catalog. You won't be sorry. Order this set of postcards. Do it now. While they last. Highly Recommended.

Lawrence Ferlinghetti, ed., **City Lights Pocket Poets Anthology**, City Lights (San Francisco, 1995); 259 pages, \$18.95.

Selections from each of the Pocket Poets series from No. 1 through No. 52. This range includes Rexroth, Patchen, Ginsberg, Levertov, WC Williams, Corso, Prevert, Duncan, Parra, Hollo, O'Hara, Lamantia, Kaufman, DiPrima, Kerouac, Waldman, Cardenal, & many others. Very Highly Recommended.

Jack Foley, **Exiles**, Pantograph Press (Berkeley, 1996); 103 pages, \$9.95.

Jack Foley is not afraid to invent new forms, to say things never said in the poem's domain, to follow his eye, his ear, his nose or his heart. These poems demand a review, but for now let us just say Highly Recommended.

Allen Ginsberg, **Howl and Other Poems**, City Lights (San Francisco, 1956/1996); 57 pages, \$12.95.

In celebration of the 40th anniversary of this book's momentous publication, City Lights just brought out a deluxe hardcover pocket book edition! Just like the previous, but prouder! Harder! Recommended.

Allen Ginsberg, Kenneth Koch & Ron Padgett, **Making It Up**, Catchword Papers (New York, 1994); 33 pages, \$10.00.

On May 9, 1979, these 3 poets collaborated in a live improvisational performance (with rules) at the Poetry Project. The text of this book documents that hilarious and exciting event. Included herein is a blank verse drama (*Woody Woodpecker Goes To Paris*), a wonderful sestina, and the most peculiar ballad (*The Ballad of Popeye & William Blake*). A must for all lovers of form and invention. Highly Recommended.

Michael Gizzi, **Interferon**, The Figures (Great Barrington, 1995); 25 pages, \$5.00.

There is a quality of fierce observation & wild post-catholic philosophy/word soup in these poems, which take up residence in your cortex & send out feelers to your fingertips & toes. Recommended.



Loss Pequeno Glazier, **The Parts**, Meow Press (Buffalo, 1995); 23 pages.

Thoughtful & experimental, Glazier's poems generate ideas as they go. Recommended.

Lauren Gudath, **Wolves**, Xurban Press (Westminster, 1995); 18 pages, \$6.00.

Longish poem in 13 parts, equal parts lycanthropy & metaphor. Very strong & cinematic. Interesting companion piece to DiPrima's *Loba*. Recommended.

Daniel Hall, **Strange Relation**, Penguin (New York, 1996); 69 pages, \$13.95.

*But by the time/you turn to me, the word has come/and gone; you blush, then pale./stunned by it all.*

Juan Felipe Herrera, **Night Train to Tuxtla**, University of Arizona Press (Tucson, 1995); 152 pages, \$15.95.

Excellent poetry by marvelous Chicano poet. Herrera manages to convey his experience and that of his family & friends in the broad range of politics, spirituality, emotion and physicality all are prone to, but so few poets can get it all down with clarity and humor. Top flight. Highly Recommended.

**Hipponax of Ephesus**, transl. by Anselm Hollo, Tropos Press (Baltimore, 1995); 13 pages.

Sharp translations of the 6th Century B.C. Ephesian poet. Funny too. Recommended.

Akua Lezli Hope, **Embouchure**, Artfarm Press (New York, 1995); 43 pages, \$ 7.95.

This collection is subtitled, *Poems on Jazz and Other Musics*, and rightly so. Some of these poems move just like a solo, and can be heard on a matching cassette, with Dick Riddick on percussion. Hope is certainly successful on tape, but notice how good this work is on the page. Highly Recommended.

Danne Hughes, ed., **Poetry On Stage: at the Red Barn Theatre in Key West**, Poho Press (Key West, 1995); 111 pages.

This anthology includes work by Regie Cabico, Taylor Mali, Adrian Castro, Ray McNiece, Carl Hancock Rux, Gayle Danley, Danne Hughes & Kathleen Balsemo. Lively.

James Kavanaugh, **A Lifetime Isn't Long Enough To Love You**, Steven J. Nash Publications (Highland Park, 1996); 9.95.

Dear Abbey says, *He should be read by all of America. He will be!* What should we add to that?

Eric La Prade, **Things Maps Don't Show**, Aegis Press (New York, 1994); 51 pages.

Robert Frank says *Moments of memory - they are the soul of the poet*. Recommended.

David Lehman, **Valentine Place**, Scribner's (New York, 1996); 95 pages, \$14.00.

*His homage to the square was a cube of yellow light.*

**LIP: A Collection of Spoken Word Artists To Benefit the Woman's Action Coalition**, Ruby Throat (San Francisco, 1995); CD.

Fantastic poetry CD featuring Brenda Coultas, Lee Ann Brown, Anne Magnuson, Beth Borrus, Anne Waldman, Eileen Myles, Wanda

Coleman & many others. Highly Recommended.

Jackson Mac Low, **42 Merzgedichte in Memoriam Kurt Schwitters**, Station Hill (Barrytown, 1994); 230 pages, \$14.95.

Poetic typographical masterpiece generated out of Schwitters's life and work, and Mac Low's amazing ability to make poetry out of whatever is at hand. Great writing, great reading. Very Highly Recommended.

W.S. Merwin, **The Vixen**, Alfred A. Knopf (New York, 1996); 70 pages, \$13.00.

*When it seemed to me that whatever was holding/me there pretending to let me go but then bringing/me back each time as though I had never been gone/and knowing me unseen among those rocks...*

Douglas Messerli, **The Walls Come True**, Littoral Books (Los Angeles, 1996); 99 pages, \$12.95.

As the second part of Messerli's study of evil in the 20th century, *The Structure of Destruction*, Messerli mixes genres & media to flabbergast the reader, laughing & crying at the same time with a taste of Vichy France in one's mouth. Highly Recommended.

Albert Mobilio, **the geographics**, Hard Press (West Stockbridge, 1995); 83 pages, \$10.00.

*Mine is an essential tremor* says Mobilio in this, his first book. Amazing poems of ideas and living in this world. It comes recommended by Creeley, Mackay & David Shapiro, to which we add ours. Very Highly Recommended.

Wright Morris, **The Loneliness of the Long Distance Writer**, Black Sparrow Press (Santa Rosa, 1996); 589 pages, \$17.50.

Marvelous, crucial work. Highly Recommended.

Sharon Olds, **The Wellspring**, Alfred A. Knopf (New York, 1996); 88 pages, \$13.00.

*Once I stripped and/entered the pit I did not want ever to come up out of it*

Bud Osborn, **Lonesome Monsters**, Anvil Press (Vancouver, 1995); 111 pages, \$10.95.

Urban post-beat poems about poverty, school, politics, anger & worse.

Suzan-Lori Parks, **Imperceptible Mutabilities in the Third Kingdom**, Sun & Moon (Los Angeles, 1995); 68 pages, \$6.95.

OBIE-winning "Best New American Play" by one of the most exciting playwrights in the country. Part of Sun & Moon's theatre series. Highly Recommended.

Rolando Perez, **The Lining of Our Souls**, Stranger Books (New York, 1995); 37 pages, \$5.00.

Exemplary prose works generated by paintings of Edward Hopper. Highly Recommended.

Carolyn Peysner, **Walking In Traffic** (New York, 1995); 21 pages.

Strong poems from the passionate power house (at Poet's House), Carolyn Peysner. Her poems are bright with streaks of darkness, waking up the reader like a shot of espresso. Recommended.

**Poet's House, Poetry in the 1990's - an annotated guide to 2700 books published during the past three years by 600 publishers. 3rd edition**, Poet's House (New York, 1995); 522 pages, \$18.95.

WOW!!! A bibliophile's dream!! A reference bonanza! Worth its considerable weight in gold. Very Highly Recommended.

Lynn Powell, **Old & New Testaments**, University of Wisconsin Press (Madison, 1995); 68 pages, \$9.00.

*How can I dream of the dead except in their bodies?*

Sextus Propertius, **Charm**, Vincent Katz, transl., Sun & Moon Classics (Los Angeles, 1995); 154 pages, \$11.95.

Utterly fantastic translations of a poet whose reputation has been damaged ever since Pound rendered him unreadable a long time ago. Vincent Katz has brought these poems back to life. Love, longing, lust & jealousy, wit & pleasure abound in these bright poems. One of the most refreshing takes on classic poetry I've ever seen! Very Highly Recommended.

Steven Ratcliffe, **Present Tense**, The Figures (Great Barrington, 1995); 104 pages, \$12.00.

Wondrous long poem in 12 sections. Ratcliffe's singular poetic shines brightly in these long, tumbling lines, moving now like music, then like film. We are let into his daily life, history and aesthetic concerns come out of the speakers in our heads when we read this masterful book. Very Highly Recommended.

Martha Ronk, **State of Mind**, Sun & Moon Press (Los Angeles, 1995); 72 pages, \$10.95.

Dreams, landscapes, botany. Language becomes translucent. The weather of the poem spins the barometer's text. Highly Recommended.

Claude Royet-Journoud, **Objects Contain the Infinite**, translated by Keith Waldrop, Awede Press (Windsor, 1995); 94 pages.

Beautiful production (all Awede books are stunningly produced) of vaporous emptiness in textual form.

Claude Royet-Journoud, i.e., translated by Keith Waldrop, **Burning Deck** (Providence, 1995); 20 pages, \$5.00.

More of same.

Kay Ryan, **Elephant Rocks**, Grove Press (New York, 1996); 84 pages, \$18.00.

Incredibly corny poetry.

Leslie Scalapino, **The Weatherman Turns Himself In**, Zasterle Press (Gran Canaria, 1995); 39 pages.

This lavishly-produced book is the text of a marvelous play, with photos from its performance included. Highly Recommended.

James Schuyler & Darragh Park, **Two Journals**, Tibor de Nagy Editions (New York, 1995); 57 pages, \$9.95.

The 2 journals accompany each other without being directly referential to each other. Schuyler's text is perfectly written, revealing but not maudlin, and Park's drawings are excellent. The combination is such a pleasure. Very Highly Recommended.



Carolyn Marie Souaid, **Swimming Into the Light**, Nuage Editions (Montreal, 1995); 77 pages, \$12.95.  
*Some memories you bury.*

Sparrow, ed., **BIG FISH presents The Whitney Beat Bash '95**

This protest against the Beat show at the Whitney contains a nasty letter from Jan Kerouac, a note from the infamous Rollo Whitehead, rants, raves & pécadillos from Claude Taylor, Rob Hardin, Elizabeth Morse, Jim Feast, Jose Padua, Mike Topp, Bob Witz, Tom Savage & Ron Kolm. An Unbearable potpourri of invective soothsaying. Recommended.

Arthur Sze, **Archipelago**, Copper Canyon Press (Port Townsend, 1995); 85 pages, \$12.00.

Excellent collection of poems by turns meditative and sensual. Quincey Troupe says, "He is wise, intelligent, a joy to be with & read." Highly Recommended.

**Talking Rain: Spoken Word & Music from the Pacific Northwest**, Tim Kerr Records (Portland, 1995); CD.

This excellent CD features Gus Van Sant, Sherman Alexie, Ken Kesey, Bill Bissett, Walt Curtis & many others. As a new genre of literature develops (the poetry CD), there will be lots of duds. This is not one of them. Recommended.

Michael Turner, **Kingsway**, Arsenal Pulp Press (Vancouver, 1995); 64 pages.

Sharp poetry reminiscent of early Michael Lally.

Paul Violi & Dale Devereux Barker, **The Anamorphosis**, Pataphysics Series (Melbourne, 1995); 26 pages.

Two brilliant works by Violi accompanied by well-done drawings by Dale Devereux Barker, beautiful production from down under. Highly Recommended.

Mac Wellman, **Annie Salem**, Sun & Moon Press (Los Angeles, 1995); 223 pages, \$12.95.

Wellman's 2nd novel, set in "low-rent rural America, festering in the backwater pollution from the urban environment." If it's anywhere near as good as his plays, I'd say Recommended.

Dan Wilcox, **Ireland**, A.P.D. (Albany, 1995); 12 pages.

*The bog field stretches to the horizon ...*

## MAGAZINES RECEIVED

**AWP CHRONICLE, VOL. 28, NO. 4**, Feb. 1996 (Fairfax, 1996); Monthly. 36 pages, \$3.95.

Interview with Phillip Lopate, essays by Joan Connor, Robert McDowell, David Appell, Jane Satterfield & Margot Livesey.

**ANOTHER CHICAGO MAGAZINE, NO. 30**, Fall/Winter 1995 (Chicago, 1995); Biannual. 269 pages, \$8.00.

Maxine Chernoff, Albert Goldbarth, Wanda Coleman, Rebecca Lilly, Kathy Acker & WD Snodgrass. Recommended.

**AUSTIN WRITER, VOL. 16, NO.2**, Feb. 1996 (Austin, 1996); Monthly. 12 pages.

The newsletter of the Austin Writer's League.

**B CITY NO. 10, SPECIAL 10TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE**, Fall 1995 (Dekalb, 1995); Annual. 83 pages, \$6.00.

Gillian McCain, Bill Luoma, David Trinidad, Connie Deanovich, Dodie Bellamy, Paul Virilio, Hilda Morley & many more. Very Highly Recommended.

**CALYX: A JOURNAL OF ART & LITERATURE BY WOMEN, VOL. 16, NO.2**, Winter 1995/96 (Corvallis, 1996); Quarterly. 127 pages, \$8.00.

Features Joanne McCarthy, Gray Davis, Maureen Seaton, Rachel Rose, Dee Axelrod & many others.

**COUNTERMEASURES, NO. 3** (Santa Fe, 1995); Biannual. 40 pages, \$2.50.

Poetry by Jennifer Call, Al Maginnes, Sandra Kohler, Dana Levin, Forrest Gander, as well as prose, letters & parodies from all over.

**DISTURBED GUILLOTINE, NO. 2** (Minneapolis, 1995); Biannual. 122 pages, \$7.00.

Features Diane Ward, Anselm Hollo, Diane DiPrima, Aaron Shurin, Jack Collom, Clark Coolidge, Kit Robinson, Dick Higgins & many more. Highly Recommended.

**EXCURSIS, VOL. 1, NO. 1**, Winter 1995/96 (New York, 1995); 120 pages, \$7.50.

Features Regie Cabico, Anne Elliott, Sparrow, Ava Chin, John Chambers, Hal Sirowitz, Laurel Speer, Eve Packer & many more. Recommended.

**EXQUISITE CORPSE, NO. 55**, Nov./Dec., 1995 (Normal, 1995); Bimonthly. 47 pages, \$5.00.

Features essays from Donald Gutierrez (on Rexroth), Gerald Burns & Fielding Dawson; poems by Ken Waldman, Lewis MacAdams, Dana Ranga, David Hilton, Dan Stanciu, Magda Carneci, Nina Zivancevic & many others. Highly Recommended.

**FARMER'S MARKET, VOL. 13, NO. 2**, Fall/Winter 1995 (Elgin, 1995); Biannual. 102 pages, \$6.00.

Rane Arroyo, Robert Cooperman, Charles Wyatt, Lisa Knopp, Simon Perchick & others.

**FIRST INTENSITY, NO. 6**, Winter 1996 (Staten Island, 1996); Biannual. 196 pages, \$9.00.

Features Ken Irby, Diane DiPrima, Beth Anderson, Tom Clark, Lizbeth Keiley & many more. Recommended.

**FIVE FINGERS REVIEW, NO. 14: METAMORPHOSIS** (San Francisco, 1995); Biannual. 214 pages, \$9.00.

Theme issue is Metamorphosis, featuring Elizabeth Robinson, CD Wright, Stephen Ratcliffe, Wendy Mulford, Fanny Howe, Ray DiPalma, Forrest Gander, Gordon Lish & many others. Recommended.

**IN HEAT: THE ALTERNATIVE NEW YEAR'S DAY READING AUTOMATIC MAGAZINE, CAFE NICO** (New York, 1996).

Features Jill Rapaport, Sparrow, Bruce Weber, Susan Sherman, Hersch Silverman, Tom Savage, Ron Kolm, Eve Packer, Enid Dame & more.

**HEAVEN BONE, NO. 12** (Chester, 1996); Annual. 96 pages, \$6.00.

Interview with Anne Waldman, also Charles Borkhuis, Rene Daumal, Jack Foley, Basil King, Laurie Price, Michael McClure & others. Highly Recommended.

**LITERAL LATTE, VOL. 2, NO. 3**, Nov./Dec. 1995 (New York, 1995); Bimonthly. 24 pages.

Jan Zimmerman, Pat Duffy, Tom Whalen, Beth Kephart Sulit, Todd Pitocki, Lewis H. Stone & Kurt Wildermuth.

**LITERAL LATTE, VOL. 2, NO. 4**, Winter 1996 (New York, 1996); Bimonthly. 24 pages.

Poe Ballentine, Dennis Doherty, Will Eno, Ben Passikoff, Diego Marcial Rios, Gregory H. Schreck, Rosalind Palermo Stevenson.

**POETRY FLASH, NO. 265**, January 1996 (Berkeley, 1996); Monthly. 40 pages.

Reviews of Davenport's new 7 Greeks, Atomic Ghost Anthology, Archipelago by Arthur Sze, & interview with Jane Miller and the usual listings of West Coast poetry events. Highly Recommended.

**PRIMARY WRITING**, Oct. 1995 (Washington D.C., 1996); Broadside Monthly. \$8 per year.

Great venue featuring Norma Cole, Tina Darragh, Hannah Weiner & Noah De Lissovoy. Highly Recommended.

**THE RUSTY WORD, NO. 1**, Sept. 20, 1995 (Providence, 1995); 12 pages.

Tribute to Juliana Spahr with Kevin Killian, Susan Schultz, D. Kemp, Marjorie Perloff, Mark Wallace.

**SMALL PRESS REVIEW, VOL. 28, NO. 1**, January 1996 (Paradise, 1996); Monthly. 32 pages.

Great collection of reviews, news, letters & guest editorials, covering the whole range of small press literary activity. Recommended.

**SMELT MONEY, NO. 7** (Lawrence, 1996); Broadside.

Monica Peck, Jim Reece, John M. Bennett, Charles Plymell, Michael Leddy.

**TOMORROW NO. 14**, January 1996 (Chicago, 1996); Triquarterly. 20 pages, \$5.00.

Lively mag, also available on disk. Features Paul Weinman, Hugh Fox, Mary Ellen Flynn, G.S. Kaplan, Holly Day, Lyn Lifshin, Constance Vogel & many others.

**WASHINGTON REVIEW, VOL. 21, NO. 4**, Dec. 95/Jan. 1996 (Washington D.C., 1995); Bimonthly. 28 pages, \$2.50.

1995 Rosebud Film Competition & poetry by Richard Roundy & George Albon, fiction by J. Battaglia.

**THE WORLD, NO. 51** (New York, 1995); 106 pages, \$7.00.

Features Paul Beatty, Eric Bogosian, Tim Dlugos, Gary Lenhart, Harryette Mullen, Murat Nemet-Nejat, Ron Padgett, Spring Ulmer & many more. Highly Recommended.



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