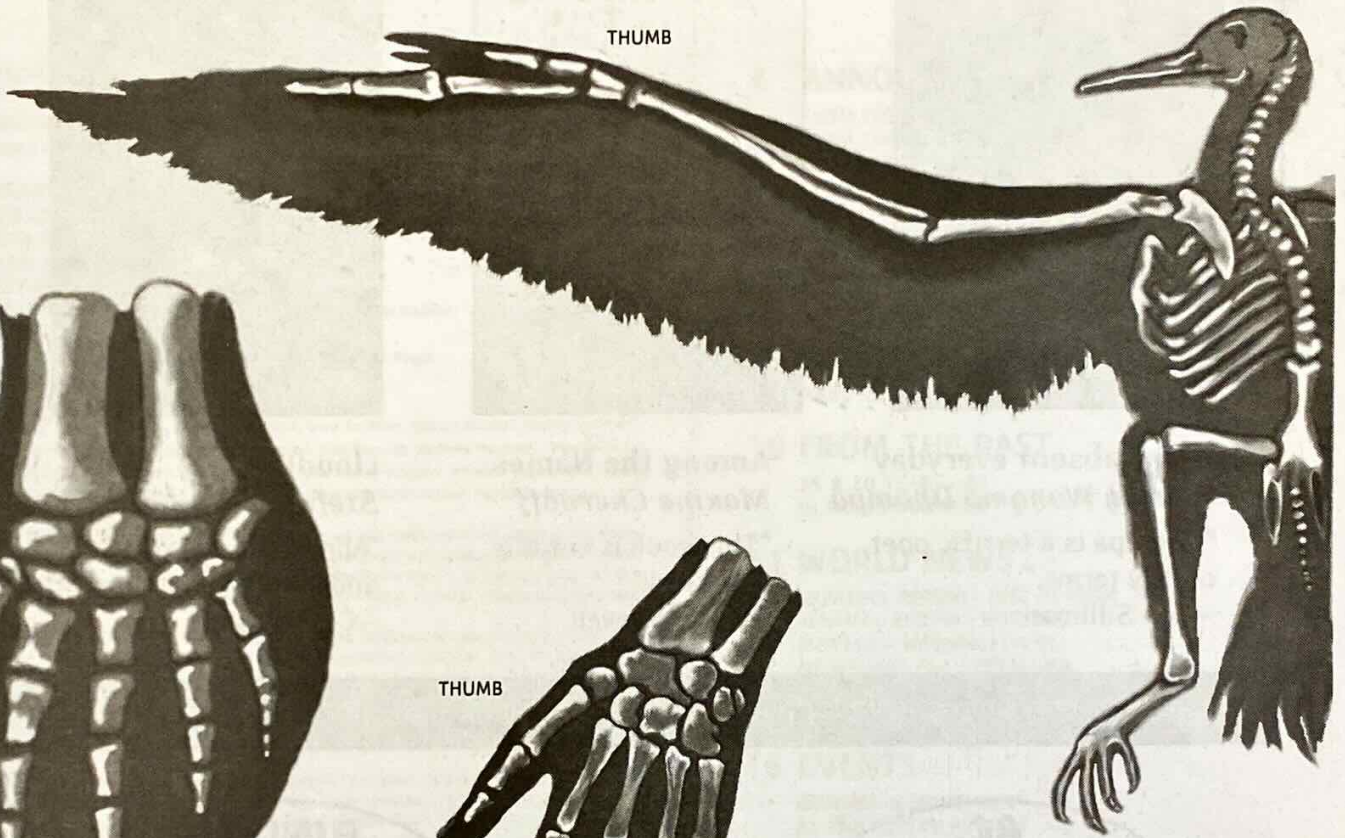


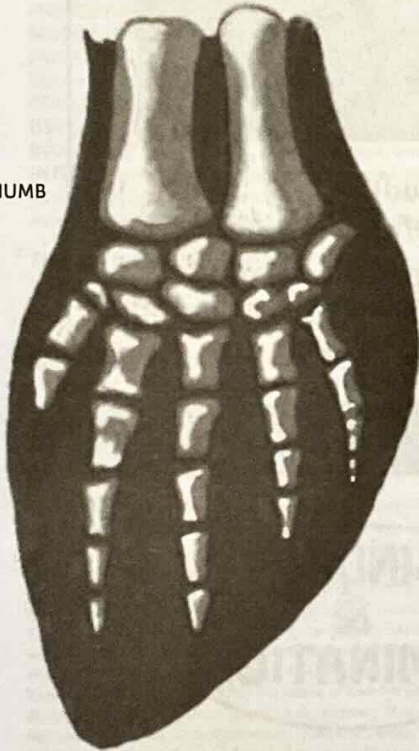
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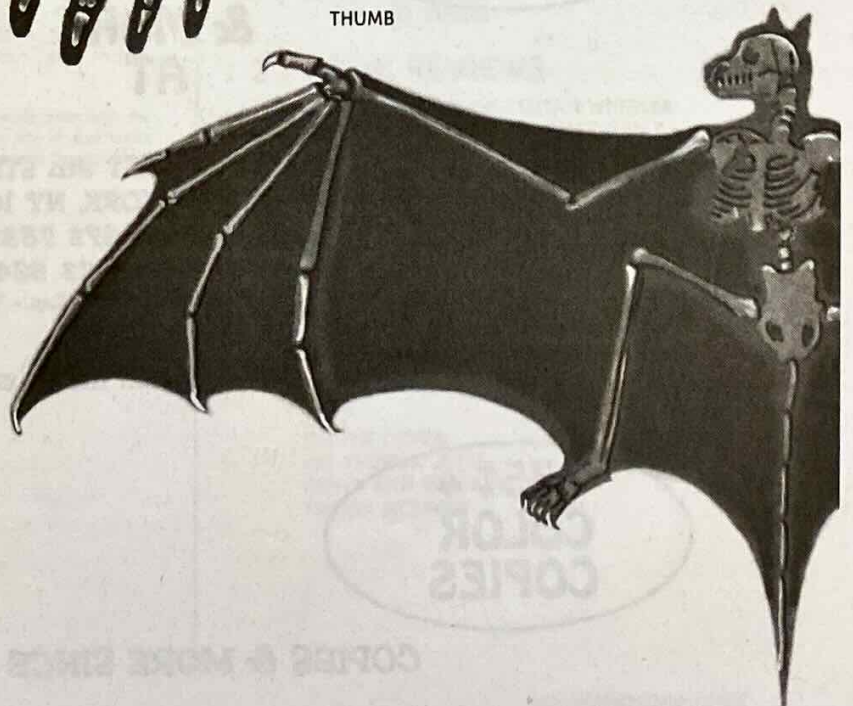
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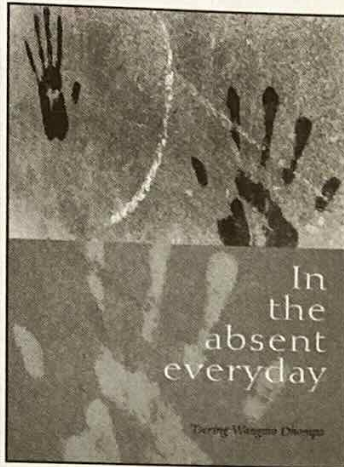


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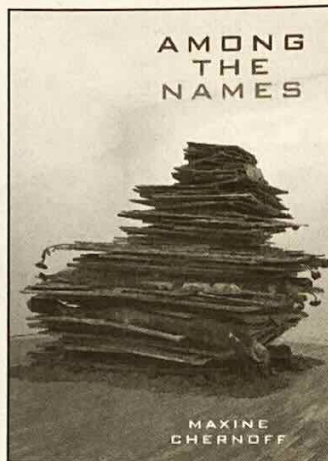
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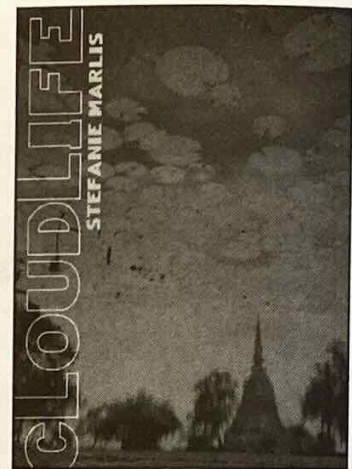
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THE POETRY PROJECT NEWSLETTER

#204 OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2005

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Note: Hurricane Katrina's onslaught followed by the devastating flooding of New Orleans has taken place just as we send this issue of the *Newsletter* to the printer. We are planning a money and supply-raising benefit to take place on Saturday, October 1 at 1 pm, and will be sending out details as we put them together. This event will take place at St. Mark's Church and should run throughout the afternoon and into the early evening. We will publicize details as they develop, but please check in with our website through September for more information: www.poetryproject.com.

Dear Readers,

On September 22, 1966, Paul Blackburn gave the first-ever reading at The Poetry Project - he read some poems, took a break, read some more, took another break, and eventually, at his leisure, finished a solo reading that marked the inauguration of what is now a 40-year old organization devoted to the presentation of poetry. 40! An opportunity in the so-called here-and-now for self-congratulatory preening and/or maudlin retrospective arghony? NO. If anything, the fact of reaching a fortieth season is cause to skip the hideous baloney of public (faux) self-analysis in the organizational manner (i.e.: no press releases and special letterhead) and continue with the work. Can we do it? Yes we can, because it is the only thing to do. What is the work? That is, perhaps, a more nuanced question than its surface implies, but from this angle there is a basic answer: the Poetry Project creates time and space for poets rigorously and independently engaged with the art to present their work to discerning, equally engaged audiences. There is the business of an active, participatory and constantly changing community going on around this work, but that business, inexorable as it may be, stems solely from the creation and presentation of the poems.

Over the decades the Project has been defined and transformed by a long and

thankfully growing list of individuals who have worked and fought to keep the place going. This includes founders and recent newcomers, stalwarts and angry critics, poets and non-poets, musicians, artists, loudmouths, crackpots, geniuses-of-the-wallflower-variety, bums, deviants, suits, saints and everyone in-between and outside. The art of poetry is too broad in nature to have its "role in society" adequately defined at any given moment - those who write, read, perform, listen to and receive poetry attend and add to the art and its functions at a rate that defies map-making and marketability. What is more readily discernible vis-a-vis poetry and the 2005 version of the Poetry Project are, respectively, the soaring rate of production of poetry-based materials and the steady growth (in number and composition) of the audiences at Project events. The Project's raw numbers from the 2004-2005 season include 90 events, 10 workshops, about 350 poets and performers taking part in these programs, and just under 8,000 people attending them. Plus, we receive more books, chapbooks, CDs and magazines than ever before - to the point where we will have to start using the website to fully list everything received, as opposed to the long-time practice of just using the *Newsletter*. While productivity alone can be a dubious measure of sustained communal interest (not to mention quality, though "absolute quality tells absolutely nothing" I heard Brew Moore say one day), it is certainly clear that the general Project community near and far is expanding, and this is only a good thing.

That said, one of the Project's long-standing challenges has been and still is balancing openness and selectivity across its programming. Although it may be news to some, there is no single style, policy or philosophy at the core of the Poetry Project's artistic sensibility, save, perhaps, a general sense that what is unknown and/or unsaid going into the making of a work is of more interest and use than the regurgitation of ready-made truths or rote experience. In detailing the process of writing her long poem "Muse & Drudge" during an interview with Barbara

From the Director continues page 10

40 SPANKINGS

The Poetry Project is 40 years old this year, but there will be no black candles that don't blow out or "Geezer" tote bags for this year's celebration. We have some exceptional events this season and some exceptional new staff members to introduce. Alas, Miles Champion is not writing this. I, Stacy Szymaszek, am writing this. He read me a one-line poem over the phone the other day so I think things are going well for him. I'm the new Program Coordinator, but more about me later.

Corina Copp stepped down as Program Assistant to pursue some higher education but will continue coordinating the Monday Night Reading Series. Her successor is Corrine Fitzpatrick who has been a volunteer here for the past year. She hails from San Diego, CA. She and Bethany Spiers toured the West coast this summer with their multimedia performance piece "Peter & Theresè". She runs the Hand-to-Mouth Reading Series in Brooklyn and is the author of a chapbook called *For Their Own Good*.

Renee Gladman is taking over for Prageeta Sharma as the Talk Series Coordinator. Renee just had a new book (poetry!) published called *A Picture-Feeling* (Roof Books) and the latest incarnation of her Leroy project, *Leon Works*, just published Mary Burger's already acclaimed *Sonny*.

This newsletter you are reading is the labor of new Editor Brendan Lorber. Marcella Durand stepped down after a stellar tenure of 2 years. As well as continuing *Lungfull!* And the Zinc Reading/Talk Series, he's working on a manuscript of poetry and on an essay that draws direct parallels between the twilight years of the Samurai in Japan and the American middle class at this moment. Brendan has developed an arcane method of sorting & resorting unanswered email so that he maintains the illusion of being totally on top of it.

Some of you will already know me from the work I did at Woodland Pattern Book

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Center in Milwaukee, WI where I had my own office but with a beaded curtain for a door. When Anselm offered me this job I felt that I could take on the position with a certain swagger (I'll save my compulsive sea-faring metaphors for future communiqués). This summer, my book *Emptied of All Ships* was published by Litmus Press and a new chapbook, *There Were Hostilities* was published by release. I couldn't be more delighted to continue working for poetry here at the Poetry Project, and look forward to meeting everyone who makes it the treasure that it is.

We look forward to seeing many of you over the coming year as we endeavor to bring you the time-honored, as well as the unpredictable. So, stop by the office and see how I've revamped the corkboards and organized the supplies. Better yet, stop by and take me out to Little Poland for lunch.

— Stacy Szymaszek

FROM THE EDITOR

It is with bitter disillusionment that I must resign as editor of The Newsletter. Oh wait...that's next issue's message. What I meant was, um, for my sins & for your amusement I'll be managing things for awhile & I look forward to many great adventures. My extreme & ongoing thanks to Marcella Durand who, as part of the plea that got her charges reduced to man one, will no longer be editing The Newsletter.

Encrypted within each issue will be instructions on the swift attainment of, you know, sheer bliss & the fantastic dubloons of spirited inquiry. In the spirit of selflessness, I'm keeping as behind the scenes as possible, although in a crouched position so the scenes trip & fall in a flurry of limbs & foul language. The Poetry Project uses whatever means it has to oppose the calcification that afflicts all institutions over time & the primary means it has are its participants.

But who are these participants? Sure, each week people show up to readings or to say hi at the office in the belfry. But

they are exponentially outnumbered by the people who embody poetry's ongoing project despite extreme constraints of time or geography. So from these pages we're with you in Alaska, we're with you on the night shift. All the comforts of the Poetry Project without the long plane flight / lost wages. The only restriction on joining the sangha is the recognition of poetry's ability to allow, in the far flung embassy of the heart & other organs, instant ordination as special envoy to the state of grace regardless of whatever nonsense our passports might imply.

—Brendan Lorber

FROM THE READERS

About the review of Jimmy Schuyler's letters "Just the Thing" — Jimmy spent 11 (not 16) years at the Porters.

Also, although Jimmy did exploit Fairfield somewhat, he also loved him, and they shared a genuine friendship, which was valuable and supportive for them both.

All best wishes,
Anne Porter

EXTREMELY NEW FACES

"Grace to be born and live as
variously as possible"

EVA GRACE SIKELIANOS HUNT
Born July 20th to Eleni Sikelianos and Laird Hunt (formerly of Ridge Street, NY, now of Boulder, Colorado), a baby girl just shy of nine pounds. Godparents are Anne Waldman and Ed Bowes.

SEGUE ON THE BOWERY

For a quarter century, the reading series funded in part by sales of the Segway Human Transporter has introduced the world to innovations in experimental poetics and highly efficient mobility devices. After the summer off, the series picks up again every Saturday at 4 at the Bowery Poetry Club. To keep things lively, the series switches curators every two months. segue.org will explain it all.

CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING

Remember the light headedness & nausea at last year's Battle Hill readings at Kili? We're not saying it had anything to do with the food they bought from the deli next door & reheated days later. We won't mention the unique fireplace-without-a-chimney, as that would be, um, libel, but the curator assures us your symptoms had *nothing to do with the poetry*. To track down Battle Hill's NEW secret location in Brooklyn, with excellent food & air quality, avail yourself of lungfull.org/battlehill. It's the first Tuesday of each month you can think of.

THE RECLUSE

There is a new Project mag in the world, but it ain't *The World*. It is *The Recluse*, with work by Macgregor Card, Chris Carnevale, Jean Day, Marcella Durand, Renee Gladman, Ted Greenwald, Rebecca Kosick, Lisa Robertson and John Yau. All shall love it and despair, for \$5.

MADE IN THE NIGHTSHADE

Belladonna*, the reading series & small press named for deadly nightshade (a cardiac & respiratory stimulant) marks its sixth year of events this fall. The readings promote work of women writers who are adventurous, experimental, politically involved, multi-form, multicultural, multi-gendered, impossible to define, delicious to talk about, unpredictable, dangerous with language. They happen once a month on Tuesdays at Dixon Place. www.belladonnaseries.blogspot.com

QUIT YOUR JOB

Your friends & family are ashamed that you have put the priesthood ahead of attending poetry readings. Lay down that sermon you were writing for Sunday vespers & pick up a mojito at The Zinc Talk/Reading Series. Every Sunday at 7. You can still take confession in the dark booths in the back, for old time's sake.

OBITUARIES

ROBERT CREELEY 1926-2005

Poetry happens for so many reasons. Robert Creeley once said "I seem to be given to work in some intense moment of whatever possibility, and if I manage to gain the articulation necessary in that moment, then happily there is the poem."

It would be hard to overestimate the courage of Robert Creeley, who left Harvard's manicured grounds in his early-20s to become the poet Charles Olson would call "the figure of outward." Even at their most interior moments, his poems are concise projections outward of the manifold and vulnerable workings of the human psyche. Olson, 15 years his senior, dedicated his life-work, *The Maximus Poems*, to Creeley, and in one of his most famous poems, referred to him as the man who gave him "the world," a tribute to the acts of imagination that Bob made possible through his poems, his belief, and even his conversation.

This spring we lost one of the great believers in poetry and its power to transform life and modes of thought into a more complex, resonant, nuanced reality; a poet who never lost sight of the politics that attend those thoughts and feelings. A poet who found a form to accommodate what Stevens called the violence from within that presses against the violence from without.

Creeley's poems are precise and knowing and have what one of his early books call "the charm." Each word in a Creeley poem is chosen with such great Yankee economy that it resonates with several possible tones in quick succession—the way "hello" can register anything from surprise to friendship to a call for help, and—in an effect that's pure Creeley—often conveys all these messages at once.

Along with his monumental achievement as a poet, his creative output included over a thousand pages of essays and fiction, a truly unquantifiable volume of letters, as well as the editing of the Divers Press, the *Black Mountain Review*, various anthologies, and selections of Whitman, Burns, Olson, and Oppen.

The facts of Robert Creeley's life should be familiar to readers of the *Newsletter*. Still, read, if you haven't recently, his amazingly moving, instructive, and hilarious *Autobiography*. On the web, it's worth checking out the electronic poetry center at Buffalo, where there are links to dozens of poems and sound-files, obituaries and memorials. In fact, Bob was the first poet I knew to embrace the electronic realm. It matched both the breadth and speed of the author of *A Quick Graph*.

Bob's story was legendary. By the time I read his poems as a teenager he had lost an eye; swum the Charles River; shared a freshman classroom with Hawkes and Ashbery; lived abroad, started a press, and hung out with Blackburn, Dahlberg, Levertov, and Duncan; taught at Black Mountain with Cage, Rauschenberg,

and Cunningham, et al.; drank with Kline and Kerouac; fought with Rexroth; typed Ginsberg's *Howl*; appeared as Lancelot in Spicer's *The Holy Grail*; had ice-cream at the Zukofsky's; broken bread with Graves, Beckett, Williams, and Pound; and had married three times. His word "company" stood in for all of that and more.

For poets of my generation, Creeley's international renown has been a fact of life. He never submitted to the view that poetry was only for the few, and he made it possible to imagine that the often obdurate domain of the poem was meant for everyone. His experiments with language extended into a deep and ongoing engagement with the visual arts and music. He collaborated with artists as diverse as Francesco Clemente and Marisol, Joe Brainard and Alex Katz, R.B. Kitaj and Susan Rothenberg, among many others and worked with composers such as Steve Lacy, Steve Swallow, and the group Mercury Rev.

A lot has been said recently about Bob's generosity, which took many forms. He had no tolerance for bullshit or whining but was capable of incredible patience, and if he saw something that was in his power to fix, he did so. And lest we forget, he could be fierce as all get-out. He was a devoted teacher, undeterred by the persistent critique of the role of poets in universities. Conversely, on the Black Mountain model, he was more interested in bending institutions to support poetry. That was one of his labors. Teaching at Buffalo was less Romantic on the surface than driving an ambulance in the Second World War or chicken farming (Bob's first career!) or living on the cheap in Mallorca and writing fiction, as he did in the 50s, or even teaching at Black Mountain. But it was no less bold a gesture and speaks to the persistence of his self-determination. He made that harsh northern clime thrive for nearly 40 years, eventually bringing in Susan Howe and Charles Bernstein. He and his beloved Penelope made their home a locating center for generations of poets.

He loved other poets. I mean, the whole enterprise of being a poet, including its public obligations. Mario Cuomo appointed him the first New York State Poet Laureate, an office he delighted in. But with Bob, prizes were never what the conversation was about, so you could be his friend without realizing he was awarded the Frost Medal, the Shelley Memorial Award and—for his collection *Life and Death*, written while he was in his 70s—the Bollingen Prize.

While his work is now a fact of American letters, part of what's beautiful about Bob's life in poetry is its restless energy, the way he let patterns return. Echoes, mirrors, and windows are all reflective, unstable media, ephemeral as the body. The means by which we see, or hear, ourselves as others. What is ephemeral is, in some

PHILIP LAMANTIA: PERPETUAL INCANDESCENCE

1927-2005

sense, always new. I remember opening *Windows* in 1990. Its first section, "The Company" (originally published as a chapbook from Burning Deck) begins with the poem "Song." So windows opened not to a view but to a sound, not an answer but a question. Bob was in his 60s and seemed to have found a place from which it was possible to begin everything again:

What's in the body you've forgotten
and that you've left alone
and that you don't want—

or what's in the body that you want
and would die for—
and think it's all of it—

if life's a form to be forgotten
once you've gone and no regrets,
no one left in what you were—

That empty place is all there is,
and/if the face's remembered,
or dog barks, cat's to be fed.

Maybe it's a rhetorical question, maybe not. But like so much of Bob's engagement with the world, the line is transformed by a genuine curiosity and an ability to face the nothingness always teetering just off the page. The most unimaginative of reviewers called Creeley's poems solipsistic and self-involved—and that was what they risked, the accusation of being too personal. But for Bob, the body was at the core of public understanding, a common experience that linked us all, far beyond the dividing lines of ideological, psychological, or aesthetic affinities. If he took the world personally, what else was there to do?

One of the great experiences a poet can have in adult life is genuine admiration for a fellow poet. Bob was unabashed in acknowledging his own elders, and that fact of his personality only served to fuel and clarify his own work. He was a bridge between the moderns and the present, devoted not to usurping them but taking the whole scene as one. He was always passing it on. The point was never to be alone there. He was intense, a powerful and improvisational presence in the lives of so many poets working in the field for the past 60 some years.

Robert Creeley was a genius of his art. This original and beautiful man, husband, father, teacher, was a true and honest friend to many of us and was, as he would say, the best of company. His poems are a continuing inspiration for us to persist both in the poem and in the world.

As Creeley wrote in a late letter to Williams, "bless you for being clear to all that a world can mean."

—Peter Gizzi

Philip Lamantia even in surcease, remains that omnivorous presence which continues to proliferate a state of perpetual incandescence. Not a state empowered by personality or anecdote, but a cryptic state of perpetual attainment. Such attainment is especially difficult to appreciate given that its vocabulary remains alchemical, recondite, disassociated from the grounded terrain of the accessible view.

This is why the standard obituary can never take into account that which rises above the monomial view of dates and places, with its acceptable resume of encounters.

This is not the context to list the specifics of a debilitated aunt, or chronicle mazes of poverty, or bring to the fore a pointless educational compendium. Philip Lamantia does not inspire a resurrection of relics. What can be evinced from his sojourn on earth are those unforgettable comminglings of language which partake in their motion incipient utopias. Utopias where glass fissions, where rainbows transmute to migration by birds

I recall in this momentary glare 3 transcendental figments from Philip's biography; Andre Breton, the "Cora Indian tribe at Nayarit," his hermetic embrace of the ozone and its birds. In the first case he is the password from a magus; in the second case he resurrects from the ashes; in the third case he returns whole sole and body to the unity of the cosmos.

This transpires over a period of 40 years. But a 40 years outside the climate as we've come to know it under quotidian occupation. For Philip it was to absent himself from the claustrophobia of time, to reach into an interior cataclysmic not unlike the imaginal radiance evinced a century earlier by Gaston Bachelard. The "double meaning," the metaphor, the shift in planes. Language as superior kinetic by analogy.

So Philip palpitates, poem after poem, book after book, like quantum spiraling, intermittent, oblique, fueled by the sun of interjuncture. Not the sun as furnace, but light as transformative eternity.

And it was this great impersonal fire which first dazzled me about Lamantia. His works became my cryptic ritual criteria. I was always listening to him in my mind, and so when I met him face to face it was a 12 hour encounter which has marked me forever. He being the saturated icon, the onyx bird who knew the invisibility of knowledge and its power beyond reason.

He knew electrical vivacity through hearing. The poet for him was conduit, was transmuted fever imbued by the grammar of superior integrity. And it is from this integrity that he knew true community is restored.

We remain saddened by the absence of his magical vehicular presence, yet his language, and the tenacity of his vigil will always inspire us as we enter the Mayan mental calendric, with new fuels in the cells, where the human species can commence concert with expanded being, over and beyond our present solar locality in the cosmos.

—Will Alexander

OBITUARIES

LORENZO THOMAS

1944-2005

Lorenzo Thomas is one of the few poets, few people who truly embody community. He is the acolyte, savant, comedian, courtier, costume designer, architect, salesperson, jeweler, criminal, fool and teacher, but most important of all, the signifier. His was an old style, if not old-school way of making great work, one poem, critical essay, lecture, class project at a time.

"The danger is seeing the world / as two extremes / The afternoons of rushing home to see her / Balanced against / turning the corner / Hoping that her car will not be there / Daydreams are better" —ouch. Anne Waldman said Thomas' poetry "could be quiet, fierce, public, scholarly, sometimes in one poem." It can be dangerous to new readers—where is he going and why? There are many ways into his work but one is to see how he uses his personal history as in this lovely poem in memory of Tom Dent, Umbra Workshop founder:

Discovering America again,
We found
The simplest of all mysteries
Called speech
Retains the register
Of fear . . .

Don't be afraid—

Someone has walked this way before
All the world's music in her hands

("Discovering America Again")

Thomas once said "I write poems because I can't sing." But it is all the world's music that helped make him available to so many communities. His work was deeply rooted in his own expansive and critical reading of poetry in the English tradition—he was fond of Metaphysical poets and the important, groundbreaking work of Aime Cesaire, Leon Damas, and other Afro-Caribbean poets from the Francophone tradition. He loved movies and innovative visual and performing arts. Thomas was a man who wanted to know what could be known. He used his position at the University of Houston as a platform from which to explore a range of topics and to create a global network of poet and scholar colleagues who all miss him terribly.

Lorenzo Thomas published three major collections: *Chances are Few* (Blue Wind Press, 1979 and an expanded version in 2003), *The Bathers* (I. Reed Books, 1981) and *Dancing on Main Street* (Coffee House Press, 2004) in addition to an English/German

bilingual book, *There Are Witnesses—Es Gibt Zeugen* (Volume 14 of the OBEMA Series published by Edition Klaus Isele, 1996). He also published many chapbooks, among them *Fit Music and Dracula* (Angel Hair Press 1972 and 1973), *Framing the Sunrise* (Sun Be/Am Associates, 1975), *Magnetic Charms* (Walt Whitman Cultural Arts Center, 2002) and *Time Step* (Kenning Editions, 2004).

Thomas' criticism has been particularly influential on a generation of critics examining the Black Arts Movement and avant garde writing from the 1960s. His participation in the Umbra Workshop and the world of the Lower East Side was vividly recalled in his 1978 essay "The Shadow World: New York's Umbra Workshop and Origins of the Black Arts Movement." In addition to his many significant essays and conference papers, he published *Extraordinary Measures: Afrocentric Modernism and 20th Century American Poetry* (The University of Alabama Press, 2000) which focused on little known Black poets such as James Fenton and provided important readings of a newer generation of writers, most notably Willie Perdomo and Harryette Mullen.

Thomas was born in Panama of Afro-Caribbean parents and came to the United States when he was four. He and his brother, Cecilio, an artist, grew up in Queens. As a teenager, Thomas took workshops at Queens College and joined the Umbra Workshop working with Dent, David Henderson, Ishmael Reed, Joe Johnson and other innovative Black writers and artists.

After serving as a military advisor in Vietnam, Thomas moved in 1973 to Houston where he began the most fruitful chapter in his life. Lorenzo and the South took to each other like, well, rice in Arkansas. There he found an active Black literary and artistic community. He worked with writers such as Harryette Mullen who said "he showed her how to be a Texas poet without being parochial." Thomas maintained close ties with his New York City roots and his readings and talks at the Poetry Project were always highly anticipated.

In the introduction to the reissued version of *Chances are Few*, Thomas explained "Writing poems involves that desperate attempt to pass through sophistication into wisdom." His poetry, even at their most daunting or dazzling, fashions a quick dance step out of the banana peels of life just like the slide on a blues guitar takes the note to heaven. I hope that Thomas is as witty in Paradise as he was on Earth.

—Patricia Spears Jones

MARC KUYKENDALL

1979-2005

Not Farewell

I carried a postcard through a normal assault
on a sense, moving at remarkable speeds.

My hair was big in the wind,
each plateau less dreamy than the last.

Partial sadness has been countered
by splendor crowding the periphery.
Soon I was accessing personality
and sat grinning like mist,

watching the sky on its roll.
It might have been then or earlier
that an underground society of trivia buffs
alienated me by speaking and shaking hands.

—Marc Kuykendall, from *My Picayune Anxiety Room*

Marc Kuykendall, whom many in and around the Poetry Project community knew as a poet, letterpress printer, small-press publisher and musician—and loved as a friend—died June 19th in his hometown of Richmond, Virginia. He was 26.

I met Marc at the Poetry Project in the spring of 1999, shortly after we'd both moved to New York. He was one of the most passionate, intense, and sensitive people I've known, and he was always quick to share his passions—for poetry, music, art, baseball—with everyone he met.

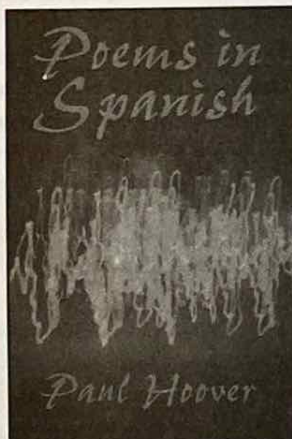
Romantic, charming, and ambitious, Marc came to New York to become a poet and musician (drums). His ideas about what it meant to be a poet and how to go about being one were many, and a number were beautifully realized. With his close friend, the artist Kate Parnell, he published a collection of his own work, *My Picayune Anxiety Room*, which featured drawings by Kate and a letterpress cover of her work printed by Marc. The poems have much to them of the (desire to be) "feminine marvelous and tough" of Ted Berrigan—one of his heroes—and I rarely saw him as happy as he was in contemplating his first book of poetry. He aspired, too, to publish others, and did so with his small press, Barretta Books, publishing letterpress broadsides and chapbooks by established poets whose work he loved—Tony Towle, Lisa Jarnot, and Kevin Davies—as well as work by his younger peers.

Marc sought to live with intensity and passion, but his sensitive nature seemed to make him susceptible to great pain. After several years of struggling in New York to live, work, write, and play music without giving in to the urge to find easy respite from his troubles, he returned to Richmond and his family to find his bearings. Marc is deeply missed by those of us who had the great fortune of knowing and loving him at his best.

—David Perry

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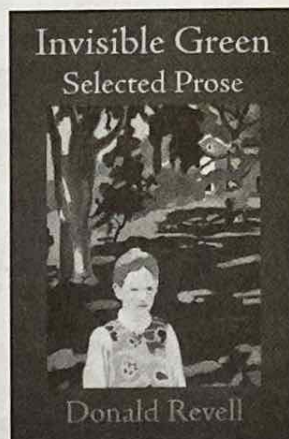
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"... a haunting attentiveness ..."
— Forrest Gander

"These poems ... seem to be written in neither Spanish nor Portuguese nor English, but in a new combinatoria, and many of them are unfashionably heartbreaking."
— Gillian Conoley

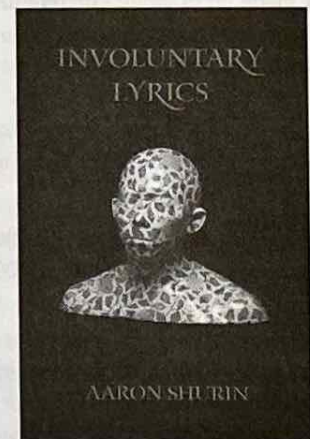


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FROM THE PAST

25 YEARS AGO IN THE NEWSLETTER

Boulder is a small town which is I think the prime cause of the Naropa Poetry Wars. War is a misnomer there. What goes on is closer to a soap opera. Both sides have stated their cases and presented their own version of "the facts." To the students, the issue has little or no relevance. But the soap does not rinse off so easy among upper echelon bards. Was that Ed Dorn snubbing Anne Waldman in front of Toms Tavern last night? Did Anne Waldman leave the room when Tom Clark arrived at the Pot Luck? There is a bad sting in the eyeball for the person new in town. However things may be improving: Tom Clark played with the Poetics department against Buddhist Studies. We won, which is a major improvement. —Bob Rosenthal (PPN#77 Oct/Nov 1980)

30 YEARS AGO IN THE NEWSLETTER

Washington's simple mindedness has taken a dangerous turn. The congress in considering Senate Bill #1 and its counterpart in the house, HR3907. Both bills were drafted under Attorneys General Mitchell and Kleindienst when Mr. Nixon was president. Both bills represent an unparalleled assault on the Bill of Rights and which, if passed in their present form (in any form for that matter), would have a chilling effect on civil rights. —Ted Greenwald (PPN#28 Oct 1975)

From the Director from page 4

Henning, Harryette Mullen spoke of working "where there might be overlapping boundaries," and creating "a poem that deliberately addresses a diverse audience of readers, with the expectation that no single reader will comprehend every line or will catch every allusion" (*P.P. Newsletter* #162, 1996). Without taking Mullen's words on as a banner, it's fair to say they can be of terrific use in terms of considering the Project's mission to promote the reading and writing of contemporary poetry and foster a community made up of vastly different individuals. The hope is that people can continue to come to the Project, be addressed eye-to-eye, mind-to-mind, and *not* know what they're going to get, no matter how familiar or unfamiliar they might be with that night's readers.

We will, in fact, celebrate the Project's longevity this fall and throughout 2006 –

surviving forty years as a poetry-based non-profit is no mean feat – the rub is that many of the things we'll be doing that might count as 40th anniversary-type activities are things we'd be doing *anyway*: honoring close friends and amazing poets recently gone, such as Robert Creeley and Lorenzo Thomas; putting out a new magazine, *The Recluse*, the style of which may seem throwbackish, but is in fact a by-product of cost-efficiency and amiable revulsion at that which is perfect bound in the world of journals; generally (some might say relentlessly) bringing in poets and artists spanning several generations to present their work and be made to be in the same space; and throwing a big party in the spring (maybe we'll auction a few things off, too). Memorials will happen. To some this is an understandably difficult matter to bear, as there seem to be more of these each season. But from this perspective, it is an honor to

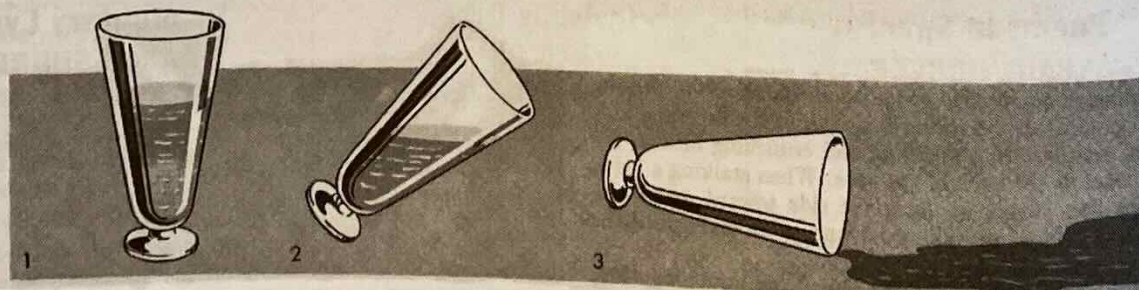
celebrate the work and lives of individuals who have helped build and shape this community, be they famous poets or legendary sound technicians, and it a necessary function of a broad, long-standing community.

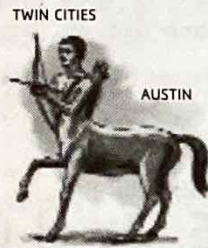
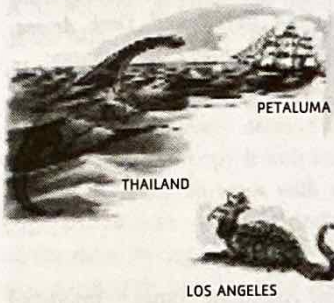
Lastly, I'd like to gratefully thank three people who have been tremendous supporters of and workers for the Poetry Project over the years through their service on the Poetry Project Board of Directors: Dianne Benson, Vicki Hudspith and Greg Masters. Dianne's fundraising efforts over the years, Vicki's yeoman service as Board President, and Greg's long tenure as Secretary add up to a huge amount of behind-the-scenes, relatively thankless work over a long period of time. Your efforts have been most appreciated.

Be seeing you,

Anselm Berrigan

decadence of the Imperial civilization





CE PUTNAM IN THAILAND

A beachside bar. All around you: animal skulls and florescent fishing nets, posters of Bob Marley, knotted wooden tables and Reggae Music. There is a dank swamp next to the bar which is masked by the smell of heavily fried garlic and chilies as well as clouds of cigarette and marijuana smoke. In the back, a thin man in brown rags, head shaved clean, round spectacles, is writing quickly, letting out occasional grunts and growls.

He calls himself Billy Blood. He's been living in Thailand now for 17 years wandering various Hippie enclaves on beaches and islands in the Southern part of Thailand for most of that time. He's also written volumes and volumes of poetry (mostly unpublished except for "a few newspapers" back in Briton) that he carries around in a bundle bound with two old leather belts. He shares his work mostly by making small hand written copies of his poems on fabric and tying them to trees, leaving a trail of his writings and wandering.

"I am the world's first and original Blood Bong Hippie," Mr. Blood tells me. "I don't know the science of it, but I've tried all kinds of blood (including my own) and smoking through it does something very different to you. I cannot explain the feeling."

At first he used to "share" his water pipe, with unsuspecting travelers - only telling them later what gave the smoke such a peculiar feeling and flavour. "That got me into some trouble." Now he hands out cards that he had printed up that explain the system (though not many are willing to try). "I never did much writing until I discovered the power of the blood bong," he admits.

He writes in quick bursts in a kind of shorthand that is almost impossible to read. He copied down a poem for me.

*Numbing gas - the Roadie's supply
Broken tooth chewing a guitar string in half.*

*Blood in order to understand him.
Don't ever come back to the office again.*

*A frightening attachment
a dying man's request.*

"The writing passes through me. I call it ether-writing. I neither remember nor re-read / rewrite what I've written, except for the tree poems selected at random. It passes through me into nothing. I carry the work around me as a reminder, like a skull."

I was supposed to sit and chat with him the next day and look through his collected works, but the next morning, looking down from my cliff top bungalow, I saw him on the beach, blood bong slung over his back, heading up into the hills, pausing briefly to tie a poem to a tree and then, moving on.

*Legends of my Herb Lorry
Brake-very boring place
Stacked up me papers
All of these animals
Run to my ankles.*

CE Putnam operates the Putnam Research for Space Opera Research.

JULIE REID IN PETALUMA

On Bastille Day, Kiki de Montparnasse, Gertrude Stein and her poodle Basket, Anais Nin and her diary, actor Jacques Tati, and a coterie of about thirty others (not counting poodles) paraded around my east Petaluma neighborhood for Petaluma's first annual Bastille Day poodle parade. None of the poodles were actually poodles, but regular dogs dressed up as such; a fifteen-year-old dachshund draped with a painstakingly unstitched stuffed toy poodle with the stuffing removed, a rottweiler patiently modeling a hat of white feathers and velcro shoes which made her prance so convincingly, an imposing looking Belgian Shepherd in a pink tutu, my own pooch of unknown ancestry in a pink cotton-ball wig and a blue lace ruff. As we passed by the Lyon's restaurant on the corner, which was full of diners, they seemed surprised to see so many people in one spot who they thought were dead. And in Petaluma, of all places! But says Alain Resnais, "In cinema, it is surprise that makes poetry and not always the filming." And it's no different in Petaluma.

Julie Reid loves to see the color celery on other things besides celery.

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JANE SPRAGUE IN LOS ANGELES

One Year's Listening

October: Frank Gehry's brand-stamp Bilbao edifice which simultaneously moved Skid Row and attempted to revivify downtown, houses the Disney Performing Arts Center and the Red Cat Theatre. On Halloween weekend, Cal Arts' Séance Conference brought poets and fiction writers to the RedCat from across the world (though mostly North America) for two days of talks and readings. Tracie Morris, Jaap Blonk, Christian Bök, Charles Bernstein, Joan Retallack, Eileen Myles, Madeline Gins, Shelly Jackson, Ben Marcus, Kevin Killian, Dodie Bellamy and many more engaged the living and the dead. While contextualized as a "séance" in the sense of French usage (from the conference material: "to meet, gather"), the talks reckoned with everything from sperm, ectoplasm, brutalist fantasy schools, black female subjectivity to notions of "the everyday." Truss up your altars: Samhain 2005 promises a second trip through the underworld with some of Oulipo's finest slated to attend.

March: Will Alexander, Eleni Sikelianos and Diane Ward read from new books and new work at Beyond Baroque in Venice. A true spirit of mutual respect and admiration permeated Beyond Baroque's Black Box theatre/reading space. Sikelianos and Alexander read from three new books (two for Sikelianos, one for Alexander) while Ward read from new work. Wry and deft, at times hilarious, Ward's poems contended with the war in Iraq, gesture & gender and the language of children's action figures. The evening closed with all three poets reading round-robin fashion and left everyone hungry for more.

Later that month, at Gallery 727 in downtown L.A., curator Jose Ramon Garcia convened poets Molly Bendo, Sesshu Foster, Jen Hofer, Richard MacGowan and others for "Bukowski Doesn't Live Here Anymore: L.A. Poets Writing Now." Surrounded by GRONK's floor-to-ceiling artwork, the poets read from new and recent work. Sesshu Foster read from his forthcoming book, *American Loneliness*, which promises to be an excellent continuation of the incisive work in his *City Terrace Field Manual*. Jen Hofer read from her recent project on urban cycling L.A. and selections from some of her translation work. Red Hen press, also of L.A. was in attendance, hawking books and urging listeners to support their local presses. While the poets represented sometimes wildly contrasting aesthetics and lyrical modes, the evening itself was an apt representation of the varied traditions at play in the literary landscape of the City of Angels; Garcia, you give good ear.

April: Back at the RedCat to hear beloved L.A. poet and UCLA professor Harryette Mullen read from and discuss her work. Mullen read exclusively from her latest book, *Sleeping With the Dictionary*. Her flawless delivery perfectly staged every syllable of razor-sharp wit and deadly deadpan play at work on the culture in the book of her tongue.

May: Anne Waldman and James Ragan at The Getty. Waldman opened the event with high excitement and verve, reading from *Structure of the World Compared to a Bubble* and *Dark Arcana: Afterimage or Glow*. Mr. Ragan recited his verse from memory.

Jane Sprague is a poet & publisher of Palm Press: www.palmpress.org.

ERIC LORBERER IN THE TWIN CITIES

Quick, what rhymes with *hegemony*? Anemone comes to mind, but there's not much I can do with that. Here, the powers that be are quite lemony: bright on the outside, but you'll purse your lips once you get a taste. Maybe I'm just cranky. It's summer in Minnesota, and you can pretty much see the steam rising off the 10,000 lakes. I'm also a bit peeved, however, because it's been a tough year for poetry in Minnesota. Witness our governor's veto of a bill to establish a state poet laureate: in a sound byte worthy of, well, our former governor, the current head cheese objected that the creation of such a position would lead to "requests for a state mime, interpretive dancer or potter."

In the big picture, of course, it doesn't matter if we have a bureaucrat-sanctioned versifier (though it's a bit of a blow to have poetry's relative unimportance codified as law). Far more worrisome is the recent closing of two large independent bookstores, because such spaces set a tone of welcome for writing on the margins; without them the reception might get chillier still. Their absence coincides with a general lack of financial support for literary readings, which means the Twin Cities reading scene is starting to look noticeably scaled back after the last few years of plenty.

One series that could do more if it had more resources is the Rain Taxi Reading Series, which I direct. Begun in 1998 as a way to showcase the work of adventurous writers (mostly poets) from outside the Twin Cities, it blossomed from a once-a-season series to more than once a month—at our peak we presented 17 events in one year, running the gamut from well-established names to mid-career writers to new blood. Yet this year we'll do only eight events, and next year may see fewer still unless we can convince the funding community that literary readings are not just a publicity stop, but an important part of the art form.

Still, it's not all bad. In late June, Rain Taxi re-ignited its collaboration with the Walker Art Center, and 341 people came (actually, more than 341 people came, but only 341 were allowed in—pesky fire codes, you know) to hear one of New York's favorite sons, Paul Auster, read from his poetry and discuss his poetic roots. It was a magical night, and not just aesthetically, though Paul's reading of his kinetic tractate "White Spaces" was powerful, and his raconteur-like reminiscence winningly genteel—yet it was also satisfying to have filled an auditorium with an event that had no commercial stake: there was no new novel to shill for, no publicist to please (Paul's *Collected Poems* had appeared nearly two

years earlier), no radio personalities to win over. This was art for art's sake in the best possible sense, and with the best possible result: it leads one back to life. I'm happy to say that Harry Mathews and Alice Notley are on the roster for the fall.

A further note of hope: last night I drank beer in the parking lot of the Minnesota Center for Book Arts, which was throwing itself a birthday party. As I sipped my pale ale and debated the finer points of Afro-Cuban jazz with a local painter, it occurred to me that these people really deserve a party: they set poetry in metal type, after all, and copy it into tiny books, and stencil it on—well, you get the idea. To work with words by hand seems to me as important to their vitality as declaiming them by voice, a gesture all the more loving by having sublimated the ego. I'm not here, says the maker, but this page I made is going to last. We need more of that spirit if our community is to thrive.

Eric Lorberer edits the poetry-friendly Rain Taxi Review of Books from a secret location in Minneapolis.

DUSTIN WILLIAMSON IN MILWAUKEE

A poetry reading in Milwaukee rarely starts until the entire audience has spent some time waiting for the poets to show up. It's best to plan on arriving on time, because whenever you get to the reading will also be the exact moment that a car waits outside of one of the poets' houses, while inside he or she discovers that the briefcase full of poems is nowhere to be found.

This was certainly the case at the reading at Voss on 7/1 where John Tyson, Mike Hauser, Zack Pieper, and Stacy Szymaszek read work to a small but interested crowd. Attempted employment of my own above mentioned "getting to the reading on time" strategy hit a snafu early on: Summerfest, the nation's largest music festival, draws almost 100,000 visitors a day. And on that particular day, cars were lining the streets, not to see progressive poetry, but rather to listen to a man with "Cougar" for a self-assumed middle name.

Voss Books is a wonderful place for a raucous reading. One of the reasons is the inexplicable friendship between the proprietor/antiquarian bookseller Kelly Voss and the first reader John Tyson, general libertine and specific publisher of the *Accurate Key* broadside collections. Woodland Pattern may be the premier poetry book center in the country, but Voss Books is the place to go to a reading if you're in the mood for a cooler full of Hamm's and a large bowl of peanuts. John read a series of poems inspired by the paintings of John Constable while sound artist Stacy Colangelo made noises that sounded like both sides of the birthing process, which is, believe it or not, unpleasant to hear.

Mike Hauser, editor of *Dodo Bird* and author of *Dirty Movies Late at Night*, made his way to the microphone and for an introduction said, "It's good to be here at the laugh factory." Mike delved into his poems of cultural reference and self-deprecating humor leading off with a poem titled "Bonus Fun (for John Tyson)," with the telling first line "Feels good to be back on top." He routinely pirouetted on the line between funny poetry and stand-up comedy. One poem began with a New York Times quote and ended with lyrics by Annie Lennox, while another mused on the impli-

cations of James Hetfield slaying a hibernating bear.

Straight out of the mid-Wisconsin delta, Zack Pieper took to the stage. I once overheard a rumor that Zack met Robert Johnson at a highway crossroads in Mayville, WI and sold his soul for a full head of hair and a regal complexion. Pieper read what were described in his own words as "odes to Joe Ceravolo that I wrote when I first read him in the UW-M library basement—well he's like the most famous poet ever—so I don't have to talk about him." Pieper's reading style belies the strong emphasis on internal syllabics in his work that might otherwise go unnoticed when read on the page.

Zack introduced surprise guest and outgoing Literary Program Manager at Woodland Pattern/incoming Program Coordinator at The Poetry Project, Stacy Szymaszek. In his introduction Zack spoke about Stacy's latest chapbook, *There Were Hostilities*, calling it "a combination of Sappho & WC Fields." She read selections from the work, which she entered as her contribution to flauer literature. In her neighborhood this means, not necessarily being out and about, but annoying and being annoyed by your neighbors: "The cliché that Midwesterners are pleasant—this proves otherwise," said Stacy. Then the audience went outside with festival noise coming from the lake and littered peanut shells all around.

Dustin Williamson has moved out of Milwaukee.

DALE SMITH / HOA NGUYEN IN AUSTIN

Poetry has been the occasion for the good social life we have in Austin. A growing group of intimate friends (really angelic creatures of sympathy and soothing) continues in many ways to make this a hearth-like scene. Often, in the past, poets have visited at their considerable expense to give readings in our small living room. Tom Devaney, Pierre Joris, Roger Snell, Jen Hofer, Eileen Myles, Rachel Levitsky, David Hess, Stefan Hyner, Brian Clements and others have paid visits and know what an enthusiastic group of supporters we have. The reception of the traveling poet is treated as a kind of holiday where news is shared and wine toasted.

Last year we began a monthly reading series at Luke Bilbury's 12th Street Books. This cozy space has received the words of Cathy Wagner, Martin Corless-Smith, Christine Murray, Joshua Beckman, Susan Briante, Farid Matuk and others. Effing Press editor, Scott Pierce, records and manages a sound archive of these readings and they'll be available soon online.

Pierce, with Effing Magazine and Effing Books, produces elegant chapbooks by Kent Johnson, Joe Massey, Anna Eyre and Hoa Nguyen, to name a few. His attention to the finer details of book making results in beautiful designs cheaply produced. The Effing Press website (effingpress.com) is equipped now with Paypal for your convenience, o poetry consumers.

In April I was one of the judges of the Balcones Poetry Prize sponsored by Austin Community College's creative writing department. Hats should be tipped to John Herndon for organizing and

WORLD NEWS

managing this prize, and for his commitment to local poetry. This year's award went to Lorenzo Thomas for his uncompromising and brilliant *Dancing on Main Street*.

Susan Briante's "Zero To Sixty" reading series at the University of Texas has provided occasions for conversation to open up between the school and the town. Renee Gladman's reading in that series last spring was remarkable. Mathea Harvey and Nick Flynn have also contributed to the word weave in the halls of the Harry Ransom Center.

Often after readings we retire to Opal Divine's for beer and spirits, and there we work out our responses to readings and the work of poetry that consumes so much of our thinking and feeling lives.

Austin poet Farid Matuk co-edited a recent issue of *Borderlands: Texas Poetry Review*. Generally this journal has been viewed with contempt by yours truly for its MFA-rigged verse. Matuk, in a sense, farts in the elevator with issue 24, however, offering a conversation between myself and Susan Briante, as well as work by Hoa, Cyrus Cassells and others.

Skanky Possum has published books and chapbooks this year by Carl Thayer, Stefan Hyner and Basil King. Winnow Press, published in Austin by Corinne Lee, released books by Catherine Kasper and Shanna Compton. Lee's book, *PYX*, a National Poetry Series winner, hit shelves recently too. These, in addition to Effing Press, mentioned above, give some idea of the quantitative word work in Austin, achieved, in great part, according to the affection of friends.

Dale Smith & Hoa Nguyen run Skanky Possum.

MICHAEL KELLEHER IN BUFFALO

When poets arrive in the Queen City, I transmogrify from curator to hotelier, concierge, chauffeur. After I take them on the "entropy tour" – which includes the Erie (pun intended) waterfront metropolis of active and inactive grain elevators; the old rail station (imagine Grand Central dropped in a field and left to rot); the large, grassy, vented mounds along the 190 which reportedly house Manhattan Project waste; and the remains of the neighborhood known as Love Canal – I usually conduct the poets to the sublime wonder that is Niagara Falls.

On the Canadian side, a glittery strip of hotels, casinos, restaurants, wax museums, and novelty shops blazes from dusk till dawn. On the American side (which as we speak is trying to catch up with our northern neighbors by Casino-izing), things are more subdued. The American Falls are gently couched in the loving embrace of a lush Olmsted Park, making one feel (minus the \$8.00 parking fee) that much closer to Nature.

To the poetic tour guide, the question thus arises: which side of the falls would this particular poet like to see? In some instances, the poet's visa status determines the answer. Best to keep foreigners on the American side, lest we risk their re-entry. Past experience

has shown that even American poets can have trouble getting home. When asked her place of birth, Lee Ann Brown, in her finest Carolina, replied, "Japan." Which was the truth, as she was born on a military base over there. But this did not appease the border guards, who detained us fifteen minutes to get to the bottom of the mystery how a white girl with a southern drawl could have been born in a former enemy country and still have a U.S. passport.

My preference is for the Canadian side: I love the tackiness and the bright lights and the whole trashy scene of Clifton Hill and the view is better from over there. At night, colored spotlights illuminate the falls. When the red beams light up as if from within the curtain of rising mist, the whole scene becomes a vision of disco hell. My favorite destination (where I have taken many a poet, none more appreciative than Elaine Equi) is the Criminals Hall of Fame Wax Museum. For a moderately exorbitant fee, you get to wander through a maze of wax figures of Charles Manson, John Dillinger, Jack The Ripper, et al.

If we go during the day, the falls are the only thing to see, as Clifton Hill is pretty drab in daylight. It's a crisp walk across the border over the Rainbow Bridge and along the river to the Falls. The best place to stand is on a concrete platform just above the lip of the falls. There one can feel the awesome power of the water surging beneath one's feet, or stare at the brilliant green-blue the water becomes just as it begins its plunge. When I took Eileen Myles to view this spot she, instead of looking at the falls, took out her notebook and looked at the sky. "I am writing a book called, *Skies*," she told me. And so she did, though I can only infer the sky above the falls in her book, as she does not explicitly name it.

Anyhow, I've been planning to write a book about taking poets to the falls, so here's a start. I'll be providing scene reports from Buffalo here regularly with notes on trips to the falls. Visitors on the horizon include: Sesshu Foster, John Ashbery, Rob Fitterman and more! Stay tuned...

Michael Kelleher is the author of To Be Sung. He lives in Buffalo.

DGLSN.RØTHSJCHLD IN ALBANY

Dear Readers,

Yes, I have moved to Albany. Even though I have been here for nearly 2 years, I keep running into people who look at me a bit puzzled & say, "I had heard you had moved somewhere?" as if once someone moves out of NYC, one never comes back. Generally, I confirm the truth of this rheumer, at which point my interlocutor points out that they keep seeing my name on announcements & such. Thus prodded, I reply (not entirely unkindly) that if they had ever come to one of those events, they would have learned the story of my leaving & the reasons for my coming back to participate in Poetical events in NYC. But sadly, as many [a very small many] of you know, no one at all comes to my events. & I realized that if I was going to go to all the trouble

of organizing a poetry event that no one was interested in coming to, I might as well do it in a town that doesn't take me 3 hours & \$34 dollars to travel to. I mean, I can probably just walk up the hill & talk to an empty room for an hour & not have to spend a penny. So here I am, Albany: Home of William Kennedy, Herman Melville, & something called The Writer's Institute.

As I have not been spending my free time on the weekends in Albany, I have not as yet really become involved with the bulk of the local [non-University] poetry scene. I do know that there are quite a few open mics, & I have heard that they are well attended & well liked. I did have the opportunity (not being in NYC) to participate in one of these a few weeks ago. There was a long list of readers & two 'featured' poets. It was an interesting experience, very different from your 'typical' NYC open mic. In NYC, I have found that people: pretty much ignore the time limits; aren't interested in hearing anyone else's poetry; & leave just after they read. Here everyone: stays till the end, limits themselves to the time allotted; & seems to actually be interested in the other poet's poems. All this would seem to make for an ideal poetical environment. The one drawback of the open mic in Albany is similar to the open mics I have seen in NYC. For the most part, I am not interested in the type of poetry performed there. I do not know which is the chicken & which is the egg, & therefore do not know which came first (fyi: If one believes in evolution, it is always clear—Egg (laid by proto-chicken) from which hatches chicken; If one believes in a 'creation' story it is always clear—Chicken (created as such by the deity) by which is laid the egg.) the open mic format, or the spoken word poem performed there. But I have digressed. My point is that these people actually listen! & they [more importantly for my ego] came up to me & sd they liked my poems, even though I do not work in the spoken word genera. Well, this might prove a refreshing change. Perhaps they would even come out to see the likes of a Poetry Game Show?

Mr. Rothschild has been referred to by Ron Silliman as: "Without question the only Major 'Occasional Poet' of my generation."

SPARROW IN THE CATSKILLS

I have been trading palindromes with noted Woodstock scholar/poet Mikhail Horowitz, who recently sent me one entitled "Confronted by a Pierced Mammary, Cockney Calls to Greek Poet for Aid": "Rad nipple? 'Elp, Pindar!" [A palindrome, of course, is a word, line or Australian passport which reads the same backwards and forwards.] NYC Super poet* Steve Dalachinsky read at The Colony (sample line: "the murderer / & the religious man / walk the same street" – from "The Chase"). His wife, the inspired Yuko Otomo, also read. (Here is "Autumn Leaves," in its entirety: "do you like it? / 'I love it! / a man keeps drumming / on a wooden drawer.") Paul McMahon, controversial local bumper sticker writer, has recently penned "MASTURBATION IS MURDER," "OUTGROW ARMAGEDDON" and "we need a constitutional amendment to keep dick cheney's daughter from marrying ronald reagan's daughter."

Ed Sanders did a performance with the Plastic People of the Universe, the Czech underground band, at the Prague Writers Conference. (He was also given a luncheon by the U.S. Embassy.) Ed is finishing *America: A History In Verse, Volume 4*, covering 1971-1985, and recording *The Fugs Final CD, Volume II*. He wrote a fine elegy to Enid Dame, the hero-poet, beginning "Enid Dame, friendly spirit, / no longer walks with a happy smile / down the bus aisle holding bouquets / of dried summer flowers / to take back to Brooklyn."

Clark Strand, founder of the Woodstock Bible Project, an interreligious Bible study group, carries around a haiku notebook. This is one of his recent works: "I scratch my bottom: / the universe does likewise / with a falling star."

Shiv Mirabito arrived in Kathmandu on February 10 this year, nine days after the King of Nepal declared a state of emergency. There Shiv began supervising the new books (on handmade paper) by Shivastan Publishing: *Original Presence* by Laynie Brown, Andy Clausen's translation of South Indian vacanas: *Songs of Bo Baba*, a reprint of Shiv's first book, *Welcome to Freaksville*, plus *Operation Minotaur*, a collection of Surrealist collage haikus by Charles Henri Ford, and a broadside of "Allen Ginsberg Dying" by Lawrence Ferlinghetti. (See www.Shivastan.com.)

Marilyn Reynolds, of Stone Ridge, writes memorable poems in French. (From "Le silence": "il prenait un couteau en pensant à / chaque morceau de sa vie— / il grattait peu à peu à l'intérieur / de son crâne, / nettoyant entièrement / des restes de memoires...") ["Clutching a knife, / his life flashed / against the blade. / Bit by bit, / in the hollow of his skull, / he scraped / every tag of memory..."]

Gracie, daughter of renowned writers Chuck Wachtel and Jocelyn Lieu, made a fetching bracelet at the Woodstock Library Fair (where I also chatted with Steve and Erica from Autonomedia).

Meanwhile, here in Phoenicia, my neighbor Robert Burke Warren, ex-bassist for The Fleshtones and Ru Paul's band, has been writing poems (from "Gone Woman Blues": "crying fingers moan frantic for / sweat petal mist.") See him on ancientheart.blog.com. D Miller, who lives and works at Menla, a Tibetan Buddhist retreat center in Woodland Valley, is applying the concept of a "re-mix" to literature (which he calls a "re-text"). He begins with a chapter and hands that chapter to another writer or poet or passerby who then writes their own version of the chapter offering a multi-dimensional aspect to the story as a whole...

Writer/artist Jaimie Cooper has just graduated high school, and is handing out fliers that read: "Listen to your soul, not your T.V." And poet Mark Dorrity (who's lately composing sonnets) wrote me: "By the way, did it ever occur to you that if John and Paul could have had children together, those children would have been George and Ringo."

*i.e. he is super of a building on Spring Street.

Sparrow is a substitute teacher in Phoenicia, New York. His new book is America: A Prophecy (Soft Skull Press).

WORLD NEWS CONTINUES PAGE 18

ALL EVENTS BEGIN AT 8PM UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED
ADMISSION \$8 / STUDENTS AND SENIORS \$7 / MEMBERS \$5 OR FREE
THE POETRY PROJECT IS LOCATED IN ST. MARK'S CHURCH
AT THE CORNER OF 2ND AVE AND 10TH ST IN MANHATTAN.
212.674.0910 FOR MORE INFORMATION.

EVENTS AT THE

SEPTEMBER

SATURDAY 9/17 6PM FREE
POEMS & SONGS:
DOWNTOWN POETRY WALK

Readings/performance by **Joshua Beckman**, **Edmund Berrigan**, **Cynthia Nelson** & **Matthew Zapruder**, as part of the Downtown Poetry Walk.

MONDAY 9/19
VERNON FRAZER & DAVID ANTIN

Vernon Frazer's most recent works are the long poems "Avenue Noir" & "Improvisations," the now-completed work that he introduced in his 2001 reading at the Poetry Project. **David Antin** is a poet, performance artist, art & literary critic internationally known for his "talk pieces." A new collection of talk pieces, *i never knew what time it was*, has just been published by University of California Press.

WEDNESDAY 9/21
MURIEL RUKEYSER/LIFE OF POETRY

The Life of Poetry was reprinted by Paris Press in 2005. Readers will include Hortense Calisher, Eileen Myles, Martin Moran, Elizabeth Lorde-Rollins, Eleanor Wilner & other special guests. Co-sponsored by PEN American Center, The Academy of American Poets, PSA, Poets & Writers, Poets House, *Poetry*, & *Bloom*.

MONDAY 9/26
OPEN READING: SIGN-UP AT 7:45 PM

WEDNESDAY 9/28
SERGEY GANDLEVSKY & FRANCK ANDRÉ JAMME

Sergey Gandlevsky is a major figure in the Russian literary scene. His work has been translated into English in *A Kindred Orphanhood: Selected Poems of Sergey Gandlevsky* by Philip Metres. (Translations will be read by Metres). **Franck André Jammé's**, *The Recitation of Forgetting*, was translated into English by John Ashbery. In 2005, he was awarded the "Grand Prix de Poésie de la Société des Gens de Lettres" for his life's work.

OCTOBER

SATURDAY 10/1 1PM
BENEFIT FOR NEW ORLEANS

A fundraiser for victims of Hurricane Katrina and the flooding of New Orleans and the nearby areas. Details to come - please check www.poetry.com for more info.

MONDAY 10/3
THOMAS EVANS & SHANXING WANG

Thomas Evans is the author of several chapbooks & is the editor of *Tolling Elves*, a mail-out magazine printing one poet & one artist monthly. Born & educated in China, **Shanxing Wang** moved to the US at the age of 26. Futurepoem just published his first book, *Mad Science in Imperial City*.

TUESDAY 10/4 7PM
THE IRREPARABLE: A TALK ON POETICS
BY ROBIN BLASER

Note location!

Poets House, 72 Spring Street, 2nd Floor \$7, Free to Members of the Poetry Project & Poets House

WEDNESDAY 10/5
ROBIN BLASER & ETEL ADNAN

A central figure in the San Francisco Renaissance, **Robin Blaser's** collected poems & prose will be published by The University of California Press next year. His books include *Syntax*, *The Holy Forest* & *The Irreparable*. **Etel Adnan** lives in Paris, Beirut, & the San Francisco Bay Area. Her new book, *In the Heart of The Heart of Another Country* was just published by City Lights.

Co-sponsored by Poet's House. Funded in part by the Canadian Consul General in New York

MONDAY 10/10
PHILIP JENKS & DOROTHEA LASKY

Phillip Jenks is the author of *On the Cave You Live In* & *My First Painting Will Be "The Accuser."* **Dorothea Lasky** edits the Katalanche Press chapbook series. Her poems have appeared in *Phoebe*, *Boston Review*, *6x6*, and *Crowd*, among others.

WEDNESDAY 10/12
JULIANA SPAHR & CLAUDIA RANKINE

Juliana Spahr's books include *This Connection of Everyone with Lungs*, *Fuck You-Aloha-I Love You*, *Everybody's Autonomy: Connective Reading and Collective Identity*, & *Response*.

She co-edits the journal *Chain* with **Jena Osman**. **Claudia Rankine** is the author of four collections of poetry, *Don't Let Me Be Lonely*, *Nothing in Nature Is Private*, *The End of the Alphabet* & *Plot*.



FRIDAY 10/14 7PM
LATASHA N. NEVADA DIGGS: RRRROCKING YOU! RRRROCKING YOU! RRRROCKING YOU!

This presentation will explore the relationship between verse & devices like the Yamaha RX-1 drum machine as vehicles that can transmit non-sensible dialects & performance: in what ways does the Betsy Wetsy & Turku boogaloo to Miami Bass? **LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs'** books include *Ichi-Ban: from the files of negrita muñeca linda* & *Ni-ban: Villa Misería*, as well as *Manuel is destroying my bathroom*.

FRIDAY 10/14 10:30PM
LEADBELLY

2005 National Poetry Series Finalist, **Tyehimba Jess** reads from his new collection of poetry, *lead belly* (Verse Press). Featuring poet **Latasha N. Nevada Diggs**, **Pat Rosal** & others.

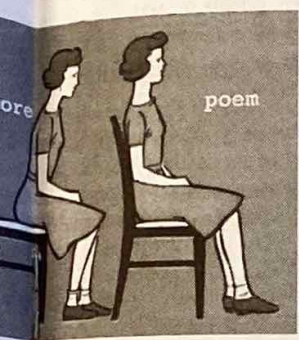
MONDAY 10/17
CLAYTON ESHLEMAN & CECILIA VICUÑA

Clayton Eshleman's most recent books are *Juniper Fuse: Upper Paleolithic Imagination & the Construction of the Underworld*, *My Devotion*, & *Conductors of the Pit*. In the fall of 2006, University of California Press will publish his translation of *The Complete Poetry of Cesar Vallejo*. **Cecilia Vicuña** is the author of more than a dozen poetry books, published in Europe, Latin America & the United States. Her most recent titles are *Instan*, *El Templo* & *QUIPOem*.

WEDNESDAY 10/19
AUGUST KLEINZAHLER & ED BARRETT

Ed Barrett is the author of six collections of poetry, most recently *Sheepshead Bay & Rub Out*, a trilogy of experimental verse novels. Born & raised in Brooklyn NY, he is now a senior lecturer in writing & comparative media studies at MIT. **August Kleinzahler** is the author of *Storm over Hackensack*, *Earthquake Weather*, *Green Sees Things in Waves* & *Live from the Hong Kong Nile Club: Poems 1975-1990*, & *The Strange Hours Traveler's Keep* among others.

THE POETRY PROJECT



MONDAY 10/24
ARLO QUINT &
MELISSA BUZZEO

Arlo Quint writes poetry & teaches English in New York City. He is a graduate of the poetics program in Orono, Maine. Melissa Buzzeeo's

City M, was published in 2004 by Leona Press.

WEDNESDAY 10/26
ANGE MLINKO & RICHARD HELL

Ange Mlinko is the author of two books of poetry, *Matinees* & *Starred Wire*. She has taught at Brown, Naropa, & Al-Akhawayn University in Morocco. From 2000-02 she edited *The Poetry Project Newsletter*. Richard Hell's new novel *Godlike* was published in July. He coordinated Monday Night readings & edited the magazine *Cuz* for the Poetry Project in the late eighties.

FRIDAY 10/28
HELLACIOUS RELATIONSHIPS

Jerry Williams, F. Omar Telan, Jennifer Knox & singer/songwriter Gee Henry share poems of violent break-ups & erotic foibles. Music by Babs Soft.

SATURDAY 10/29 1PM FREE
ROBERT CREELEY TRIBUTE

A celebration of the life & work of the much-loved, hugely influential poet & long-time friend of the Poetry Project, who passed away on March 30. Participants include: Irene Aebi, Ammiel Alcalay, John Ashbery, Amiri Baraka, Charles Bernstein, William Corbett, Carolyn Forché, Peter Gizzi, Allan Graham, Bobbie Louise Hawkins, Anselm Hollo, Fanny Howe, Lisa Jarnot, Alex Katz, Vincent Katz, Basil King, Harry Mattison, Brad Morrow, Simon Pettet, Archie Rand, Tom Raworth, Ed Sanders, Leslie Scalapino, Rod Smith, Anne Waldman, Keith Waldrop, Rosmarie Waldrop, Elizabeth Willis, CD Wright, & John Yau.

MONDAY 10/31
GLORIA GERVITZ & ROBERTO HARRISON

Gloria Gervitz lives in Mexico City. Junction Press has published the definitive edition of her vast oracular poem *Migraciones / Migrations*. Mark Schafer, known for his numerous translations of Latin American poetry, worked on this project with Gervitz for thirteen years. Roberto Harrison edits *Crayon* with Andrew Levy & the *Bronze Skull Press* chapbook series. His most recent chapbooks are *Chorrera*, *bus*, *Mola*, & *mani*.

NOVEMBER

WEDNESDAY 11/2
DAWN-MICHELLE BAUDE & BILL BERKSON

Dawn-Michelle Baude is the author of several poetry books & chapbooks, including *Through a Membrane / Clouds, Egypt, & The Beirut Poems*, as well as the critical work, *reConnaître: Curt Asker*. Bill Berkson's recent books include *Serenade, Fugue State, Hymns of St. Bridget, 25 Grand View, & Gloria* with etchings by Alex Katz. A collection of his criticism, *The Sweet Singer of Modernism & Other Art Writings*, appeared from Qua Books in 2004.

FRIDAY 11/4 10:30PM
RELEASE THE TEETH!

Richard Loranger reads from his latest collection *Poems For Teeth* (We Press) in this dental celebration with a flossing film by Laura Zajac, an oral hygiene presentation by Deborah Pasquale, D.D.S. Free toothbrushes & readings by several poets.

MONDAY 11/7
OPEN READING: SIGN-UP AT 7:45 PM

WEDNESDAY 11/9
LEONARD SCHWARTZ & BARBARA HENNING

Leonard Schwartz is the author of numerous collections of poetry, including *The Tower of Diverse Shores, Words Before The Articulate*, & most recently, *Ear and Ethos*. He is also the author of a collection of essays *A Flicker At The Edge Of Things: Essays on Poetics*. After living in New York City for 23 years, Barbara Henning has relocated to New Mexico. Her most recent book is a novel, *You, Me and the Insects*.

FRIDAY 11/11 10:30PM
TOUCHED

Thaddeus Rutkowski reads from his latest novel *Tetched* with Hal Sirowitz, Janice Eidus, Amy Ouzoonian, Tsaurah Litzky & Cheryl B.

MONDAY 11/14
AMY KING & SANDRA MILLER

Amy King is the author of the poetry collection, *Antidotes for an Alibi* & the chapbook *The People Instruments*. Please visit www.amyking.org for more. Sandra Miller's first book of poems, *Oriflame*, was recently published by Ahsahta Press. She currently resides in central Ohio, where she works as an Artist-in-the-Schools.

WEDNESDAY 11/16
THE COLLECTED POEMS OF TED BERRIGAN

A reading from & celebration of *The Collected Poems of Ted Berrigan*, due out in October from U. of California Press. Readers will include Alice Notley, Pierre Joris, Ed Foster, Anselm Hollo, Ron Padgett, Eileen Myles, Andrei Codrescu, Jim Carroll, Anne Waldman, Miles Champion, Wanda Phipps, Susie Timmons, Sharon Mesmer, Jacqueline Waters, Brian Kim Stefans, Bob Perelman, Todd Colby, & others.

FRIDAY 11/18 10:30PM
GAMAL CHASTEN & CO.

Poet & Playwright Gamal Chasten of the theater ensemble Universes presents his latest work.

MONDAY 11/21
GERALDINE KIM & CHUCK STEBELTON

Geraldine Kim's first book, *Povel*, is the winner of the 2005 Modern Poets Series & was published by Fence Books. Chuck Stebelton is the author of *Circulation Flowers*, published by Tougher Disguises this year. He is the Literary Program Manager at Woodland Pattern Book Center.

MONDAY 11/28
JILL MAGI: THE LOOK OF TRUTH: THE SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION, VISUAL ART, & POETRY

Discussion of an interdisciplinary poetics: from anthropology to poetry to history & archeology to visual art. Micro & macro level approaches to theme-based poetry, art, & creative prose. Jill Magi's book, *Threads*, is forthcoming from Futurepoem & her chapbook, *Cadastral Map*, was published by Portable Press at Yo-Yo Labs.

WEDNESDAY 11/30
KIM LYONS & BRIAN KIM STEFANS

Kimberly Lyons' *Saline* has garnered praise from many people of great repute. Along with Marcella Durand, Kristin Prevallet, Rich O'Russa & Chuck Stebelton, she read her work & gave a talk at the Adler Planetarium in Chicago in June, 2004. Brian Kim Stefans is the author of the books of poems *Free Space Comix, Gulf, & Angry Penguins*. A book of his critical writing, *Before Starting Over*, is slated to appear in late 2005.

THE POETRY PROJECT IS WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE WITH ASSISTANCE AND ADVANCE NOTICE. SCHEDULE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

WORLD NEWS

ROD SMITH IN

WASHINGTON, DC

DC? Poetry? Scene? You bet! Been a busy spring & somewhat lazy summer. One bit of big news has been the imminent moving on of Mark Wallace & Lorraine Graham to San Marcos, CA. Mark in his over ten years, and Lorraine in her over five have both been big deals down here in the writing, in the publishing and, of course, in the reading series running departments. Mark's Ruthless Grip has hoisted as well as hosted literally LOTS of great readings over the years and will continue under the auspices of Kaplan Harris and M. Magus. One of the many big funs we had this spring was a reading by Susan Smith Nash at Mark & Lorraine's apartment. In the Grip series this year Kim Rosenfield and Koko rocked the house along with a return after a few year hiatus by the fabulous Mel Nichols. Tina Darragh and Joan Retallack said lotsa good stuff at their reading. Buck Downs is a scary hoot.

At DCAC, another series, hosted by Tom Orange & Lorraine, Kasey Mohammad came by with his exorcist voice. He was so on TV. Very French. Linda Russo came down from Buffalo, wow she was really good. Another aspect of the DC madness of late has been its intermingling with the ongoing Baltimore madness. We've been lazy in the summer but them Baltimorons don't stop. Recently they did a terrific reading of Zukofsky's *80 Flowers* as well as a tribute to Jackson Mac Low. Heather Fuller's *O Book Startle Response* just came out. We read in Baltimore for that & my new CD from Narrow House called *Fear the Sky*. At Bridge Street we had Lisa Jarnot & Thomas Evans give their first reading together just weeks before they were married. We have the best time down here gang. Sorry. We just do. Everybody's still trying to get over the loss of Creeley though. And will be for quite a while I'm sure.

I forgot to mention great stuff at the Folger and Georgetown, Anne Waldman in the Shakespeare theatre, look out! Georgetown had Moxley & Lauterbach, Brian Kim Stefans, Linton Kwesi Johnson, &&&. Have a look at dcpoety.com for poems, schedules, links, etc.

Rod Smith is the author of Music or Honesty, The Good House, Protective Immediacy, and In Memory of My Theories.

CA CONRAD IN

PHILADELPHIA

P.A.C.E. (Poet Activist Community Extension)

"None of what appears in front of me could be nourished or even in a state of being if I didn't break in from the margin where *I have plunged within myself*"—Nicole Brossard. PACE is not only an acronym, it is also the Italian word for PEACE. Down here in Philadelphia the PhillySound poets have been taking poetry—literally—to the streets. (www.PhillySound.blogspot.com) It started last Xmas eve day with poets Frank Sherlock, Linh Dinh, Mytili Jagannathan and myself, CAConrad. We read in front of ham-

burger joints, banks, churches, handing out our poems on war, America, and all the margins of speech. Prepared for a battle, we weren't prepared for the joy and love our fellow human beings shared with us for what we were doing. Since then there have been readings by the Federal Building, at the president's 2nd false inauguration (in falsetto for a nod to the false). Let this happen in every city and town these P.A.C.E. readings, and contact the PhillySound to meet up with you and your fellow poets on a street corner some afternoon to read, and to get a sense of the possible joys waiting out there with people you had no idea really WANT to hear and read your poems. Let's get the LOVE going! I'm TELLING you! You'll be telling ME!

CAConrad's book Deviant Propulsion is forthcoming from Soft Skull Press this Autumn, and he can be reached at CAConrad13@aol.com.

JACK KIMBALL IN

BOSTON

With poetry marathons of past seasons a distant memory, summer in Boston has returned to a nearly verse-free zone, save one notable exception. July through early August, Northeastern University poet William Howe brought his SoundVision/VisionSound (SV/VS) III to Nave Gallery in Somerville, a renewed initiative from his earlier curating of poetry, art and performance at SUNY-Buffalo in the 1990s. The exhibit portion of SV/VS collected pieces from 30 poets and artists, language-drenched stills from video by Nico Vassilakis, video plays-on-word by Caterina Davinio, short texts punched out of psychedelic pastels by Sheila Murphy, five-foot-square silk-screened flags with icons and copy by Kathy Ernst, CD samples from performance groups, Be Blank Consort and Bufffluxus, a collaborative visual text about co-authorship by cris creek and Kirsten Lavers (a.k.a. Things Not Worth Keeping), as well as numerous graphic-word pieces in mixed media by mARK oWens, Dave Baptiste Chirot, Lawrence Upton, Michael Basinski, Wendy Collin Sorin, mIEKAL aND, ric royer, Amy Sara Carroll, Christopher Fritton, Douglas Manson and L. A. Phillips, among others.

Mid-July there were readings by SV/VS participants, including Bufffluxus performer Matt Chambers who read others' work, sporting a xeroxed photo image of each poet as a mask, reciting pieces by Charles Bernstein, Frank O'Hara, Jack Spicer, Gertrude Stein, and others. John M. Bennett, a founder of Be Blank Consort, seemed opposite of blank, wearing a glyph-filled "poetry barbecue apron," varying his voice modulations as he read/sang his own texts. Geof Huth, who writes about "visualizing poetics" on his blog, dbqp.blogspot.com, emphasized visual-sonic qualities in his material by moving around the gallery space bare-foot as he performed poems distributed to the audience in chap book form, finishing with an ad-libbed piece that included screams and then whispers, a format he calls "poemsong."

Jack Kimball is publisher of Faux Press, and blogs at pantaloons.blogspot.com.

WRITING WORKSHOPS AT THE POETRY PROJECT

ONE'S OWN LANGUAGE: A WORKSHOP IN BASIC ELEMENTS – LISA JARNOT TUESDAYS AT 7 PM: 10 SESSIONS BEGIN OCTOBER 11TH

"Language is a fundamental amorous and poetic experience." –Robin Blaser. In this literature seminar we'll look at the fundamental elements of language that contribute to a poem. Beginning with theories of linguistics, we will study the building blocks – from phonemes and morphemes to the feet of the line to the composition of the poem as a whole. Our study of poetry will focus around the mechanics of the craft – how do poets consciously (and unconsciously) measure lines and music and rhythms and rhymes in poems? What lineages do these senses of craft evolve from? How do poets in different cultures approach the formal considerations of their craft?" Lisa Jarnot is the author of three full-length collections of poetry including *Black Dog Songs* (Flood Editions).

VERSIONS: WRITING OUR ENTHUSIASMS – NADA GORDON THURSDAYS AT 7 PM: 10 SESSIONS BEGIN OCTOBER 20TH

"In this conclave you will investigate techniques to help you attain "maximally energized" writing and write exactly what you need to read. We'll approach verse as *versions* (as in rewrites or cover tunes), *animadversions* ("strong criticisms" of prevailing orders), *subversions*, *con-sources*, *introversions* (private language, hypnosis), *reversions* (examining and borrowing from really old or games), *diversity* (with special attention to "other" cultures), and *conversions* (collaborations). Participants will: explore and articulate least one poem with music, costume, props, or movement for performance (*extroversion!*). Nada Gordon is the author of four books, including *V. Imp.* (Faux Press) and, with Gary Sullivan, *Swoon* (Granary Books).

PARANORMAL POETRY – SIMON PETTET

FRIDAYS AT 7 PM: 5 SESSIONS BEGIN OCTOBER 14TH

"If you wish to understand the invisible", goes the old Talmudic saying, "look carefully at the visible." We shall search out and propose poems and poets from around the world that act with particular magic as agents/instances of that invisible. We will examine: "Disintegration of Personality," "Genius," "Sleep," "Hypnotism," "Sensory Automatism," "Trance," and "Ecstasy." As well as "Inspiration," "Altered States of Consciousness," "Visionary Experience," "Ghosts and Hauntings," "Dreams," etc. We will also examine the poet as "paranormal", as medium and shaman. Students are encouraged to bring their own knowledge and enthusiasm and be willing to research and stumble (serendipitously) on relevant texts." Simon Pettet is the long-time Film Archivist at the Parapsychology Foundation, and the author of *Selected Poems* and, most recently, *More Winnowed Fragments*, (both from Talisman).

HYBRID POETRY – DREW GARDNER

FRIDAYS AT 7 PM: 5 SESSIONS BEGIN NOVEMBER 18TH

"In this workshop, we will experiment with fusing separate genres of writing into poetic hybrids. Students will work using different elements of fiction, drama, memoir, and nonfiction mixed and recombined with the genre of poetry acting as a catalyst for producing writing that crosses lines. We will do readings of poetic line-crossers, including Kamau Brathwaite, Bernadette Mayer, Charles Olson, Sei Shonagon, Alan Davies, Novalis, Jalal Toufic, Basho, and Kathy Acker as well as poetic writings that are not normally thought of as poetry, such as Emerson's essays and Krazy Kat Comic strips. We will also look at questions of structure, content and effect in poetry from the perspective of other art forms, especially music and filmmaking, and from the perspective of other disciplines, especially natural science and psychology." Drew Gardner is the author of *Sugar Pill* (Krupskaya) and conducts the Poetics Orchestra, an ensemble featuring poetry and structured improvisation.

THE POETRY OF LOVE AND LUST (& OTHER EVERYDAY STUFF) – BILL KUSHNER

SATURDAYS AT 12PM: 10 SESSIONS BEGIN OCTOBER 15TH

"Being: poetry of The New York School, Language poetry, the academic poem, the confessional poem, experimental poetry, the prose poem, gay & lesbian poetry, et al. Therefore, we will be studying: John Ashbery, Frank O'Hara, James Schuyler, Kenneth Koch, Ted Berrigan, Alice Notley, John Donne, William Shakespeare, Lewis Warsh, Bernadette Mayer, Sylvia Plath, et al." Bill Kushner is the author of six poetry collections, most recently *In The Hairy Arm of Whitman* (Melville House) and *That April* (United Artists).

The workshop fee is \$300, which includes a one-year individual Poetry Project membership and tuition for any and all fall spring and fall classes. Reservations are required due to limited class space, and payment must be received in advance. Please send payment and reservations to: The Poetry Project, St. Mark's Church, 131 E. 10th St., NY, NY 10003. For more information please call (212)674-0910 or e-mail info@poetryproject.com.

FEATURE

MATERIALIZING FREEDOM IN A HOSTILE LAND:

SALTON CITY COLLEGE BY JOEL KUSZAI

This brief introduction describes a land use proposal for the development of Salton City College, located in a planned community on the western shore of the Salton Sea, the famously troubled drainage sink a short drive south of Indio, California. The free international community college would combine the informal research clusters of the "free international university" movement and the practical aspects of mechanical and technical schools of the 19th Century.

Recent research by the University Research Lab (URL) has changed the terms of the proposal considerably. The narrative arc of this evolving public policy scheme is the story of the URL, its participants scattered, its archives in disarray, research subjects returned to their homes and families with barely a memory of the incidents of March and April 2003.

Since some at the URL work within the academy as "writing teachers," we consider first-year composition—like cooperative extension—to be the most important work of the university, so it was only natural that when the war began, we dreamed of building a university in the desert.

If the condition cured by specialization is dispersed responsibility in the totalized air, then its abject other is a cultured myopia. The URL was interested in the institutional self-imagination of the university, how the values of the community are articulated in an ethic of work, one that is unhealthy and unproductive academically. A primary objective of the URL was not to objectively research the university within the bailiwick of particular disciplines, but to engage in action research—research as a component of overt social struggle.

We saw ourselves committing scholarship modeling and anticipating future scholarship, if not legal action. We began with the premise that by attacking the foundation of the campus, its core historical ethos of "work." We sought to destabilize its authority with respect to a public swept up in its state-corporate loco-parentis, encouraging direct participation in "public education" with ownership, meaning, and reason. If we did this correctly, no one would even notice.

Conceived by a first-year student concerned with the depressive nature of student life, the poverty of inquiry among students generally, and a passive acceptance of living conditions in particular housing scenarios, one URL research project began with a psychogeographical study of the "New Campus Housing Complex" — high-rise dorms where stu-

dents are grouped according to academic year. Did the advantages of having first-year students together in an area once an unadorned recreation field outweigh the usefulness of such a field? Part of the master plan for the campus, the urban scenario creates social density furthering the ethic of "work" among first-year students. From the report we learn that taking time to relax and have fun is taboo among these students and that there is a high incidence of "appearing to work" and "assuming the work position."

What would it take to build a campus in the middle of a desert more than one hundred feet below sea level?

University Research Lab was the primary agency behind Factory School's location search for an alternative college in the Cayuga Basin. That project sought to purchase from the Boy Scouts the sixty acres of Camp Barton, with its two gorges, waterfalls, and beachfront access just north of Trumansburg, New York. Unfortunately, Factory School was unable to raise the three million dollars required to purchase the property.

The sense of writing and composition in the kind of "unitary urbanism" proposed here—what the situationists called "living critique"—is to some degree intended as a model of the kind of action research not typically allowed in the specialized setting of the university. By "unitary urbanism" the situationists meant to deny the "conditioning and false participation" of modern urbanism, of which the modern university is perhaps the most blatant example. Situated within the milieu of architecture, political philosophy, and art, the goal is not to decorate the walls, but rather, something resulting in the "invasion of the whole of daily life." It's an aggressive tack, one denied students at the corporate university:

"All space is already occupied by the enemy, which has even reshaped its elementary laws, its geometry, to its own purposes. Authentic urbanism will appear when the absence of this occupation is created in certain zones. What we call construction starts there. It can be clarified by the positive void concept developed by modern physics. Materializing freedom means beginning by appropriating a few patches of the surface of a domesticated planet." ("Elementary Program," 117)

Obviously, the scope of the Salton City College plan is such that it could not be carried out within the space of the academic year. Despite this limitation, which

turns it into an extended metaphor, a fantastic lecture on the possible but improbable, the initial audiences for this project were those associated with the first-year writing course, with its multiple tasks, responsibilities, as well as audiences. An invitation to reconsider first-year writing, it is an invitation to living critique, to become college founders and administrators by administrative fiat. In the language of the situationists, "living critique means the setting up of bases for an experimental life, the coming together of those creating their own lives on terrains equipped to their ends" (117).

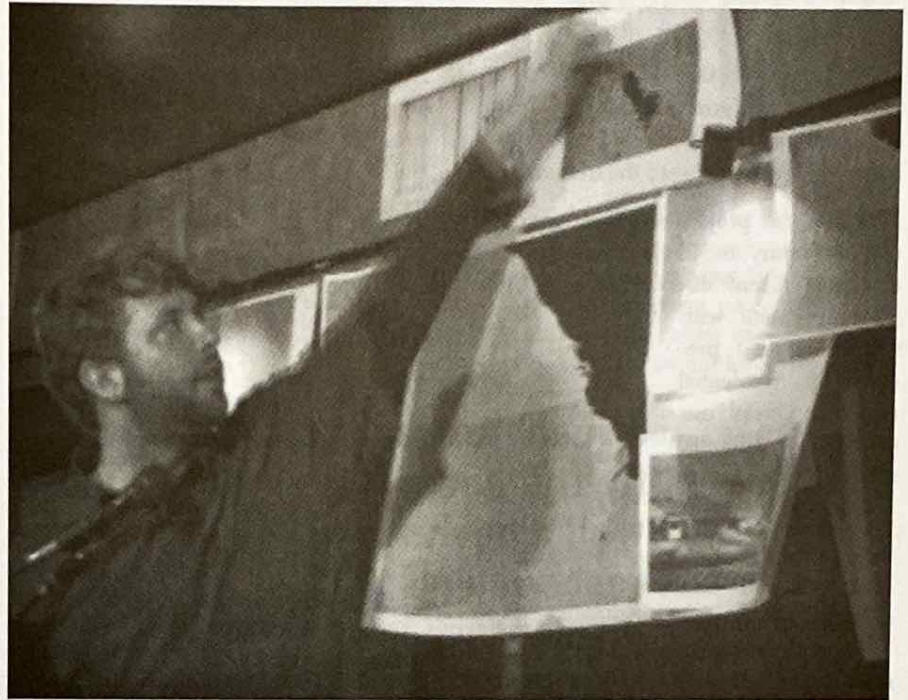
The original plan was to build a college or university that would be free for students, with as many jobs as imaginations.

The project is modeled, in part, on Joseph Beuys' call for a "free international university," as a "place of organizing research, work-methods and communication" for those who wish to dedicate themselves to "questions of a social future" (Beuys, 1978).

What would it take to build a campus in the middle of a desert more than one hundred feet below sea level? Who would go there, who would build it and who would pay for it? The Salton Sea Free University was conceived as a public works project, a public university designed to appeal to state-corporate leaders, financiers and their philanthropist friends, as well as the merry band of anarchist educators, unemployed PhDs, autodidacts and others who would populate its teaching staff. Free, its students would be recruited from Los Angeles to Rio de Janeiro to Kuala Lumpur.

It would realize Republican Congressman Sonny Bono's dream of a rehabilitated Salton Sea area, a development scheme for an area currently not well developed, indeed, an area experiencing hardship from a general lack of opportunity and all that means.

The first versions of the Salton Sea Free University described it as a seventy-five year project, divided into three units of twenty-five years each. The first twenty-five years would consist of research and planning, the second would involve intense capital development, and the third twenty-five years would be the actual building and material preparation.



Joel Kuszai discusses Salton Sea College at The Zinc Talk/Reading Series February 2005.

During most of this time smaller satellite operations would be established both to enact the values of the educative organization, but also as testing sites for the various factors that would come into play.

Salton Sea was chosen as the site for the project, due to the relatively empty stretches of land on the western shore. But where exactly would such a campus be located? And what about the lake? It is rapidly deteriorating and there is a paucity of support for cleaning it up. This, despite the fact that the Salton Sea Restoration Act was passed in 1998 in honor of Sonny Bono, the entertainer turned Palm Springs mayor and congressional representative, who championed the rehabilitation of Salton Sea. Returning the lake and the region to its intended status as a sort of California Riviera, as it was known in the 50s, will be expensive.

Most of the detailed questions, from site specs to curriculum, were deferred in this early diagram of a dream. The building of any large public works project requires that a number of problems be solved. The fragile and complicated ecosystem, the high salinity of the water, the intense summer heat, the quake-prone San Andreas fault running through the hills to the east—all of these need to be addressed through study. The work required would be immense, with each specialized discipline engaged in "living critique"—in this case,

the appropriation of an essentially empty, unpopulated space.

The research, conducted by an army of scientists, planners, sociologists, and others, would lead to an onslaught of public and private funding, a U.N. mandate, and more. The project would require hundreds if not thousands of white papers resulting in a mammoth archive of planning arcana. It was felt that if the research did not materialize, if certain problems could not be solved or conditions were not understood, then the project would not advance beyond the first stage.

Seen in the context of the next two to five hundred years, a period that will see the filling-in of the desert between Las Vegas and San Diego, Phoenix and L.A., the consideration of a major campus in this area is inevitable, even if it takes seventy-five years and a billion dollars.

Looking back at this plan, its grandiosity leads to the charge of utopianism, an idealization of impossibility at the expense of the material present and the concrete actions we can do. While ideas generated by the University Research Lab led to the consideration of satellite schools, in places as diverse as Detroit and San Francisco, the immensity of the university in the desert detracted from the seriousness of the proposal. Research into particular problems consisted of fantastic dreams: the seismic instability of the earth led to a

design that put the university on a tremendous platform, not unlike a floating airport, suspended in a jelly-like substance designed to absorb the tremors.

If at first this project was some sort of utopian fantasy—the kind easily mocked or dismissed—recent discoveries, including an empty site with infrastructure prepared for residential and commercial use, enabled a substantial revision of the original seventy-five year plan.

Salton City, a community planned and developed in the 1950s and 1960s, was the most ambitious of the communities to grow up on the edges of the lake formed by

engineering accident one hundred years ago. By 1958 the North Shore had been developed, complete with a two million dollar marina and a sense of celebrity. It was a destination resort to rival any in the world. Stocked with fish, the lake became a major sport fishing area, speed boat racing destination, and general water wonderland. As towns spring up on all sides of the lake, nothing beat the false optimism, the utopian commercial urge in the development of a planned community.

While approximately 15,000 lots in Salton City were sold by 1961, very few homes were built. An urban grid, with street signs, power, water and sewage, sits abandoned, its ghostly claddagh rings visible from low earth orbit.

Lately the intense odor following fish die-offs—caused by large algae blooms and the high salinity of the water—and the general economic malaise of the area has left the Salton Sea in disrepair, occupied by mobile home and trailer park squatters, budget snow bird campers, and crystal meth labs. The questionable viability of the lake threatens a major habitat on the Pacific Flyway, the Salton Sea Wildlife Refuge (now known as the Sonny Bono Wildlife Refuge).

The original enthusiasm of Mary Bono to carry on Sonny's passion for the rehabilitation of the lake has faded, a victim of water politics, budget problems and the fading memory of Sonny. Recent water rights deals have led to a reduction in the total inflow to the Salton Sea in favor of feeding the sprawling growth of San

Diego County. The initial twenty-three million dollars budgeted for research into de-salination pools, plants or pipelines, or other means of reducing the salinity of the water, has been stripped to three million, and plans to restore freshwater inflows to the lake have been mired in water rights politics,

perhaps the greatest impediment to any further density in the Salton Sea region, not to mention restoration of the lake itself.

All of this makes Salton City a perfect location for an alternative college, if not a major university. While the brutalist imagination of a university built with poured cement has been revealed as an instance of repressive consciousness, the site itself suggests the kind of activity that will be possible, and where.

While there are many possible plots on the abandoned grid, the airport district on the southwestern side of town—about a mile from the lake—represents the best option: a multi-use commercial and residential space. Rather than large-scale permanent buildings, portable or vernacular temporary facilities can be obtained and constructed for much cheaper. The example of experimental architects working with a class of pneumatic tensile structures commonly known as inflatables, helped the utopian Salton Sea Free University become Salton City College.

"All space is already occupied by the enemy, which has even reshaped its elementary laws, its geometry, to its own purposes."

From 1970 to 1973, with the blessing of college administrators, and help from University of Maryland School of Architecture graduate students, a group of students from Antioch built and maintained an inflatable structure in Columbia, Maryland.

Granted temporary space from Columbia developer, the Rouse Company, as well as support from the Educational Facilities Laboratories, a non-profit established by the Ford Foundation to help develop experimental solutions to institutional questions of space, the students designed and tested three prototypes before seeking the necessary permits to build on their parcel of land. Despite the sixties culture of euphoria, this project was enormously practical, even functional in its attention to detail: environmentally sensitive and appropriate technology at the service of perceived needs, despite the fact that materials testing was based largely on research done by NASA, Goodyear and Union Carbide.

While the campus at Columbia lasted only until 1973, the cooperative volunteerism, the sense of engagement underwriting disciplinary necessity, as well as the appropriation of corporate research for other ends, still serve as model. In fact, as part of a series of research projects into "historical antecedents" for the Salton City College project, the University Research Lab is preparing a video documentary on the Columbia inflatable. For more information, to participate in the Salton City College project, or the University Research Lab, please visit factoryschool.org/url.



"He is nobody's fool."

BOOK REVIEWS

BERNADETTE MAYER SCARLET TANAGER New Directions / 2005

Bernadette Mayer's writing desk sits on a sun porch and looks out over a pasture, to a line of trees that border the Kinderhook Creek, a place where the poet swims in the summer and to which she takes daily walks in all seasons. She is surrounded by working farms; depending on which window she looks out of there are either horses or cows in her view. Underneath the desk clutter is an electric typewriter circa 1970s, the kind that makes a click, click, sound. If you go to E. Nassau you can see it yourself and you can hear the clicking of the keys.

Almost a decade ago, Mayer moved from E. 4th Street in the East village to upstate New York, to the village of E. Nassau that lies between the Berkshires and the Catskills. The shift in her gaze from the concrete of Ave. A to the natural world is striking. In "Essay," a poem from *The Golden Notebook* (1978), Mayer wrote wistfully "I guess it's too late to live on the farm."

Scarlet Tanager, published by New Directions this spring, reflects Mayer's rural life, the one she often wished for in her previous poems. Her publisher bills this as "Mayer's first collection of new work in nearly a decade." As most readers of the Poetry Project Newsletter know, Mayer suffered a life-threatening cerebral hemorrhage in the 90s, that left her with physical limitations. Of that frustration Mayer writes, "rendering her / even more mixed up in her constant thinking, / and she has lost the fine motor coordination / in her right hand—she can't handwrite. she has / to cook the chicken liver while phil is not in / the kitchen ... she is lost but has no choice / she can't attempt suicide again for fear of failing. / she will cook the liver. she also cooks two pierogi, / eats them & sits in the sun."

Mayer has lost none of her devastating wit: in fact, it has only deepened. *Scarlet Tanager* starts out with a collection of Mayer's absurdist epigrams: "I am a cockroach in a roach motel / soon I'll be convicted for murder / my name is louis anemone."

Or take this one from the wal-mart epigrams:

phil and i went to one of the marts
and bought a rug like we're supposed to
only thing is
it's purple, we're not married,
the rug is the wrong size
and my name is bernadette

The bucolic myth of the country is flattened by "The Petty Blues," a sardonic inventory of the pros and cons of the four cars she has "access to." Mayer asks, "who is the goddess of automobiles?" Life in the country requires that one serve these fickle machines or else lose one's livelihood as noted in "Phil Magneteer Ne Plus Ultra July 23-26." "phil had to quit his job making magnets / a magneteer / because he got a flat tire."

Rituals of upstate life are documented such as the late winter rite of boiling maple sap into syrup. Here, set in an overcast morning against the backdrop of the war, the helplessness and depression the speaker is seeking to overcome are held at bay; the boiling of the sap provides a welcome distraction, a momentary pleasure, a joyous occasion off the grid. As Mayer writes in *Maple Syrup Sonnet*:

syrup's up again
day dawns gloomy but birds
have found the feeder at last, march 22, 2003
of course there's a war
bush says, the war is going well
phil's tending the evaporator fire
now he's cleaning & raking:
things we didn't do:
rake, reiki, make war on iraq
sophie & zac arrive, our premier
evaporator tenders & mood elevators
let's go. first i eat sweet
maple syrup tapioca, birds gather
in the nearby sycamore tree, then flee
to eat maple syrup over LSD

This dis-ease is revisited in "On Sleep," a long poem on the elusiveness and seduction of sleep: "Sleep is the train my father saw in the sea during the tornado / We're in the last car, it's a spacious sleeping & dining car / Sleep is a lot like the \$21.50 taxi ride I took to my dentist / in my dreams" ... "When you wake in the mid-

dle of the night and that or the number / of warheads on each missile worries you, always write / down your thoughts about sleep. In the morning you / might find that they are dreamlike enough to reassure / you that you got more sleep than you thought."

"This Is A Problem-Solving Dream Where The Group Attempts To Change The Language" is perhaps the most coded work and comes from an intense state of being as the narrator struggles to return to a place of equilibrium after her attempt to be relieved of the burden of language:

"So I do this work for you / as usual / relieving you of your luggage, the language baggage you carry around."

The narrator admonishes, curses and makes demands of the reader in this exorcism of writing demons:

The red, green, & blue color codes have
been exercised,—
I abdicate them. No more dialogue,
nothing personal & no rhetoric.
But I will tell you, I will continue to tell
you what I dream,
That is the white or blank color.
Your turn.

Throughout *Scarlet Tanager*, Mayer continues her famous experiments with form. She includes French translations of her poems and her mistranslations back into English. In "House & Bernadette" Mayer interviews her house; a collaboration with Joe Carey, "Words that Rhyme With Disease," features lively word play, "i'm glad i didn't get it from the landlord / i know i couldn't get it on a fjord / i have lyme disease / just like rice & beans."

Scarlet Tanager is an honest accounting of the burdens of a poet. Most recently Bernadette Mayer celebrated her 60th birthday along with a book party for *Scarlet Tanager* and a smaller book, *Indigo Bunting* from Zasterle Press.

Although Mayer has never flinched from difficult truths, she shares her joys also. She is in and of the moment of what we call life.

Brenda Coultas is the author of *A Handmade Museum* and the recipient of a NYFA fellowship in Poetry this year.

BOOK REVIEWS

SUSAN WHEELER
LEDGER

University of Iowa / 2005

A first look at *Ledger's* sumptuous line up of blurb-ing back cover authors might intimidate a reader. Wow, Ashbery, Perloff, Bloom and Davidson. A cabal of whammies. Yet, immediately the tone and fast, almost slangy first poem announces: this is no academic project. This is work that has been lived. "I'll be here when / you're no longer, / opal midnight / my refrain." That's singing and down. Finance is an ostensible subject of *Ledger*. The personal and global aspects of money, currency, coins and debt are a scrim through which the poet, all of us, must operate. It's an ambitious horizon and her commitment shares ground with poets Rachel Loden and Jennifer Moxley.

Wheeler sets a sort of narrative of origins in a dreamy, yet fraught familial landscape that denies the redemption of the lyric: "relief is not what you think, not the light... *Against a tree* I swooned and fell and water seeped into my shoe and a dream began to grow in me... And while I slept / I was fed, and clothed, addressed" A wish for sustenance frustrated and withheld; just one of the layers of consumerism *Ledger* explores.

"She wants the Minnesota charm in green." Wanting, not having, a charmed world withheld. Jump cuts scrape out the filling interstices that would slog it down. These poems offer speed and essence. The poet's yearning for an experience of the organic to suck us back out of "The Carnival's" "Wipeout near Yo Yo and Claw; Graviton, Zipper, Chaos, Rock and Roll"- comes to "would that a wave from

the night past the trees take him." Wheeler comes back again and again to this tension, a romantic knot. Allows solace in the thrall of language's play, as though nature could only be had in glimpses. She is indebted to Dickinson, always contrasting the promise with the return, the untraversable gap between an implied paradise and an exacting reality. Coolidge is evoked too, as in "Trade" with its vocabulary taken from old shipping receipts. "The stil's a curve, the helix unzipped and in the brackish bag with its damp wax gel." ("Charity Must Abide Call for Ancient Occupation").

Ledger offers the poet's new workings of varied forms. "Each Cot's An Altar Then" is made of lyric chunks spaced out in a fractured mosaic. Wheeler's array of sources comes into play in voicings from mixed texts, more call and response than postmodern collage. Filmic noir brevity contracts against the splayed out pieces in the book. "Hand, Mouth, Market" speaks to the poem as a shelter - an enclosure - which holds overflowing meanings. "In any structure you can obtain cableservice / ...something / not invented by Disney but American nonetheless." The house of the poem may be its true subject. "Bumps on the / bark of the maple concern you by and by" allows for this slight seepage into the poem of the minutiae of the organic.

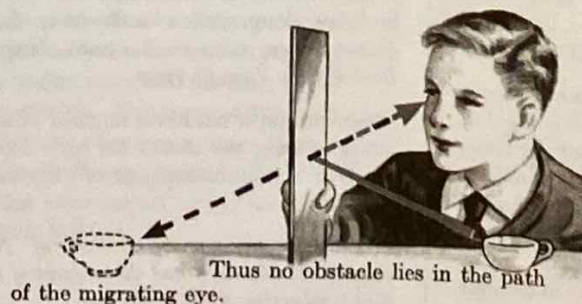
"Good Goods" updates "Roanoke and Wampumpeag." "they tried figurines, energy shakes / cruises, whales and tulle / ...but enslaved did they remain." This is a very funny and hurting kind of poem. "And so, they filtered apparitions / through dermatologist and butcher, and wept / despairing of return." Paradise, release, Duncan's "eternal pasture folded in all thought" ("Often I am Permitted to Return to a Meadow") is withheld not just from the poem striving for that ecstasy, but denied to a misdirected middle class lost in the spectacle: "this language sucks."

The centerpiece poem "Money and Go" is a travelogue. Departure and travel from industrial wasteland (home) to oceanic edge sounds of the film "The Gleaners and I" and, impossibly, Mallarme's "A Throw of the Dice." Alludes to a sacrifice that scraped the fat away leaving the tentacles of the poem.

Ledger's concluding long poem, "The Debtor in the Convex Mirror," is a complicated, angled reading of Flemish painter Quentin Massey's "The Money Lender and his Wife (1514)." Wheeler reenacts the tensions of this painting: "it's the men in the courtyard / the jig up with the finger, who'll reckon the dark fundamentals / once the weigh-ins are done." Is this specific and descriptive poem a meditation on commerce in Ghent, 1514, or just as much the art and poetry scene, Manhattan, late 20th century? This densely researched poem is an homage to Ashbery's "Self Portrait in a Convex Mirror." Quotes "My guide in these matters is you." Massey guides Parmigiano guiding Ashbery guiding Wheeler. A sweet linkage of seekers - at least in the mirrored globe of the game of poetry. "She watched the cashier in the convex mirror." In Wheeler's brave recasting, the self-engrossed artist is her younger self waiting to steal a coveted object (a witty comment on her use of Ashbery's theme). Wheeler reverses Ashbery's "he has surprised us / as he works" with her notion of "It's we who discern the privacy he wants we who can see what he lacks." The poet is boundaried from the subjects of the painting, only gazes. Less possibility now for Ashbery's nearly exalted merging with his subject's object.

Yet Wheeler's work is of her generation and the wit and plain weirdness of all the things we've made and collected - and that make us - come in to her poems; Jean Stapleton, Count Chocula, Vanna, "buck fifty a café latte on sale." The sources for her work including predecessors, provide a well from which to draw these poem's potent concentrations.

Kimberly Lyon's *Saline* (Instance Press, 2005) is available from SPD.



MARK NOWAK
SHUT UP SHUT DOWN
Coffee House Press / 2004

The poems in *Shut Up Shut Down* incite a vital sense of empowerment, in which we can realize that, as workers and as citizens, we simply *must* unite to secure fair wages, and to insist on something like decency in corporate practices. The breadth and depth of documentation in these poems comes as a real gift, and Nowak is very generous in sharing the details of his composition methods and materials. This book is instructive, while bursting with stunning poetic insights.

In "\$00 / Line / Steel / Train," Nowak writes, "The basic form (the photograph of a factory inside this / frame) does not discontinue." The jobs end, but the ramifications of those severe conclusions, the ramifications of abusive labor conditions, the ramifications of exploitation of workers - these do not end. That we would function as such:

How empties
out the mouth
of air-How you've

got to learn How
to [get] chew[ed] with your mouth closed

Nowak's poem "Capitalization" beautifully and frightfully weaves passages from a grammar manual published during Reagan's presidency, quotes from articles on striking air controllers, and text from labor policies of GE and Westinghouse. It is instructive to look at how disparate publications from the same time portray—and betray—a culture.

In "June 19, 1982," Nowak documents the devastating anxiety and rage that can result from job exportation. The poem culminates in the account of the bludgeoning of Vincent Chin, a Chinese-American man who on June 19, 1982 went to a Detroit bar and got into an argument with a supervisor at Chrysler Motors. Chin was blamed for job loss in the American auto industry, which was depressed due to an increase in Japanese imports. Outside of the bar, Chin was beaten to death with a baseball bat by the GM manager and his stepson. They were placed on a three-year probation and fined \$3,000.

Shut Up Shut Down is indexed under Corporations—Corrupt Practices; Corporate Culture; Business Ethics; and Greed. Nowak's book is a weighty contribution to the accomplishments and potential of poetry.

But don't take my word for it. Take the words of the workers documented in Nowak's book. Take the "5.25.2000" section of his poem "Hoyt Lakes / Shut Down":

My neighbor across the street lived through the General Motors shutdown; the son (a bricklayer) of my next-door neighbor (a bricklayer) shot himself in the head. It's like getting kicked out of your house . . . In my position [the Speaker lost his leg in an accident at the mine a year ago] I don't know what's going to happen now. I think the way it came down was totally wrong. In the 1980s it was due to the economy throughout the U.S. Now the economy is strong. I hope it's not politics. I hope Cleveland-Cliffs [LTV] is not pulling a fast one on us. Is there any glimmer of hope? I don't know. Everybody is usually talking. They're quiet . . . It's like everybody's been shot through the heart.

Jim Gorski, a millwright in his 31st year and the union recording secretary said, "I think this is going to be devastating not only to the young employees but to the old ones. I don't know how you rebound from losing 1,400 jobs.

*
"the American custom" =
"the American customer"

And then, take the words of Richard Hipple, LTV Steel President, in the epigraph to "Hoyt Lakes / Shut Down": "It's important to see that this is not a people issue" (May 24, 2000).

In Nowak's acknowledgments, he thanks the founders of the Union of Radical Workers and Writers for helping him keep alive Subcommandante Marcos's idea that "The war for the word has begun." Take that to heart. Take that to the front lines.

Carol Mirakove is the author of Occupied (Kelsey St. Press) and Mediated (forthcoming from Factory School in 2006).

MURAT NEMET-NEJAT
EDA: AN ANTHOLOGY
OF CONTEMPORARY
TURKISH POETRY
Talisman House / 2004

Translator, critic, and poet Murat Nemet-Nejat has for some years been providing English speakers a detailed look at developments in Turkish poetry. Although with luck it's not the culmination of his effort, *EDA: An Anthology of Contemporary Turkish Poetry* certainly gives the fullest look yet at Nemet-Nejat's project. Readers wanting an introduction to 20th century Turkish poetry as well as guidelines for future exploration can find it here.

It's a strange time for anthologies. By now it's a cliché to note that the work found in one always reveals the ideology of its editors, yet the cliché has accompanied not the death of the anthology but an explosion of anthologies that wear their ideologies openly. Even as standard English language anthologies like Norton and Heath prepare to release new editions with thousands more pages than past versions, as if desperately believing that somehow they can get it all in, the editors of other too-numerous-to-read anthologies struggle to find convincing (or at least interesting) reasons for creating alternative concepts of what an anthology might be.

Nemet-Nejat negotiates this problem carefully. He makes no claims for *EDA* as a thorough representation of 20th century Turkish poetry. Instead he acknowledges individual bias, claiming that the poems in the book represent primarily his own interests. But he also highlights a concept that helps him move beyond merely personal investments. He defines "eda" (a term he borrows and alters from Mustafa Ziyalan) as an impulse animating much of the poetry he presents, an "essence" perhaps best defined in a phrase by Walter Benjamin as "distance from the host language"; that is, as those marks that make a poem distinct from other uses of the language in which it's written. Nemet-Nejat breaks down the "otherness of eda" into three aspects, thematic, linguistic, and metaphysical. While we should be wary of the idea that a single concept can sum up all the important developments in any literary tradition, the concept of eda is broad and precise enough simultaneously almost to do the trick.

BOOK REVIEWS

The anthology traces a spirit of innovation in Turkish poetry since 1921, when "for the first time in almost four hundred years" Turkish "became a written literary language." Nemet-Nejat locates this spirit in three major periods: the initial one of the 20s and 30s; the period known as The Second New during the 50s and 60s; and finally a contemporary era beginning in the 90s. Each era is represented by substantial selections of poetry by major figures and a smattering of work by related writers. Also included are some important era-undermining iconoclasts, Ilhan Berk most prominently.

One of the anthology's great successes is its focus on a number of writers who deserve to be more known outside Turkey than they are. The book wisely plays down work by the great Nazim Hikmet, who of these poets is most thoroughly familiar to English-speaking readers, in favor of writers whose work will benefit more from attention here. It's a pleasure to read extended sequences by writers such as Ahmet Hasim, Orhan Veli Kanik, and Ece Ayhan, and to compare their achievements with contemporary poets like Seyhan Erozelik, Sami Baydar, kucuk Iskender and others. It's fun to consider which of these poets seem more incisive outside of their cultural context and which more lodged within it. For instance, the earthy ironies of Orhan Veli, the satires of Ilhan Berk, and the linguistic adventurousness of Ece Ayhan resonate more across cultures than the male erotic sado-masochistic anguish of Cemal Sureya and its critique of Sufism.

The anthology also does a good job of tracing at least the outlines of various cultural problems in Turkish poetry, including sexual orientation, gender, and others. It's interesting to see the coded homoerotics of Sait Faik in the 1950s contrasted to the open homosexuality of Ahmet Guntan's linguistically sly 1995 book *Romeo and Romeo*. And if gender issues emerge primarily through the way women are imaged by male poets, the presence of an outstanding contemporary poet like Lale Muldur at least begins to develop an understanding of women's

writing in Turkey, although more clearly needs to be done. By the 1990s, Turkish poetry was also taking new risks with linguistic experimentation, and it will be intriguing to see where that tendency heads.

The shorter selections of work by figures less central to Nemet-Nejat's thinking were occasionally more frustrating than enlightening. It's not always clear why some of these poets are included, or what good it does to translate no more than several lines of their poetry. Yet in at least pointing to these writers, Nemet-Nejat suggests possibilities for further exploration. And many of these poems were both insightful and clearly connected to the anthology's interests.

The book ends with a series of essays that provide brief readings of poems or develop more thoroughly the guiding concepts of the anthology. While other essays addressing the more marginal figures would have been welcome, it's hard to pretend that demanding greater thoroughness is always the best way to handle anthologies in an era that highlights ideological transparency and the necessity of limits. Readers of *EDA* come away with much more than an understanding of Nemet-Nejat's approach to Turkish poetry. They see as well a detailed outline of a poetic tradition that's emotionally gripping and intellectually adventurous, one clearly deserving greater world attention.

Mark Wallace is the author of a number of books of poetry and fiction, including most recently Temporarily Worker Rides A Subway.

PATTIE MCCARTHY
VERSO
Apogee Press / 2004

Pattie McCarthy's *Verso* catapults beyond the perimeter of her extensive source material, ranging from the Irish Famine to the study of postmodern nostalgia, and manifests stunning language from this *trebuchet* effect. Her dynamic research into and around the boundaries offered by historical documents and etymological evidence deftly connects to the unfathomable and allows us to cut through the limits of time and place. It's alchemy that makes for a potent *piseog*.

Verso is divided into four parts, each of which unfolds onto itself, gesturing back and intuiting ahead. By cyclically interrupting and layering her source material, McCarthy turns the narrative-historic cone to its expansive end, freeing her material from any one fixed place in interpretation or chronology.

The title for the first section, *otherwise (an eke name)*, refers to the process through which language is corrupted and changed through "wrong division" of the word. The term "nickname" emerged from the Middle English eke-name or additional name. In the occult it is one's secret (sacred) name. McCarthy investigates the loops and whorls of eke names to identify their semiotic and ideological fingerprints lost from one era to another.

Verso's time travel is not just a meditation on historic narratives but a reflection on the very act of looking backward. All historic documentation is the act of re-inven-

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tion. By pacing within and around the events, McCarthy's work investigates the unknowable and reveals that the past is as malleable as the future ever was, and its actualities even more difficult to ascertain. One of *Verso's* fascinating sources, Svetlana Boym's *The Future of Nostalgia*, quotes a contemporary Russian saying, "the past has become much more unpredictable than the future."

Verso inhabits the history of Ireland, and by extension the history of land ownership. The few options the poor were presented with during the famine accelerated both their demise and the concentration of wealth in the nation. "They are intent on digging / they sold the ground out from under their feet." But the source of the famine wasn't merely the capriciousness of a single root, nor the genocidal English rule. Much as contemporary Americans turn a blind eye to third world suffering, the Irish middle class, through their acceptance of an inherently corrupt system of wage slavery and land ownership, was complicit in the death of countless people. As the middle class benefited from the transfer of property into their hands, the peasants who sold the land to survive "had to wait for new maps" before they could bury the dead in the very land which had starved them.

The book's rhythm changes radically in *ipseog*, like McCarthy's work itself, a *ipseog* is many things, readily moving beyond the confines of usage and definition. A *ipseog* is both a belief in folk magic and that magic's resulting charms. It also can refer to a curse.

"Are you a witch or / are you a fairy? / Or are you the wife of Michael Cleary?" The Irish children's song is eerily echoed in the *ipseog* section, as a perceived curse forms the structuring principle. McCarthy reinterprets the story of Bridget Cleary, known primarily for her brutal murder at the hands of her husband. The incident ruptures apart in McCarthy's staccato examination of Cleary's life. Fiercely independent and refusing to abide by social and religious strictures, Cleary was suspected by her husband of being a supernatural changeling. He and her extended family burned Cleary to death in her kitchen. These poems rescue the memory of Bridget Cleary from the imposition of a single rendition. She is

neither just a ready-made feminist martyr nor the Church's personification of "the old ways," used to quash pagan folk magic in Ireland. Bridget Cleary was an individual, with infinite complications and contradictions.

McCarthy brings us to the moment when we most doubt our own perceptions and faith in the veracity of how previous conditions are handed down to us. By pulling minutiae apart and representing them out of linear time, McCarthy allows us to re-experience our basic assumptions in destabilized environments. Her mastery of lucid detail and an ability to break from narrative constraints creates one revelatory event after, before and alongside another. We imagine a police report as it notes Bridget's pining, orphaned dog and the seven-herbed "remedy" she was force-fed. We hear Bridget's perfectly iconic: "I am, Da" – one of her last attempts to convince her family that she was indeed still herself, and not a fairy imposter.

McCarthy digs through the etymological blur of misremembered names and stories, winnowing through years of rubble in overgrown fields of disrupted environments, to connect individuals long since gone to who we ourselves might be. Though history has portrayed Michael Cleary's actions as motivated by domestic or class rage – or as the "primitive" end result of ignorance and superstition – *Verso* opens an uncomfortable array of more nuanced possibilities. Possibilities that reveal how each of us is more like Michael Cleary than we'd like to admit.

Verso penetrates the act of remembrance through a holistic understanding of time that takes us beyond yesterday and tomorrow. The origin of all conditions

and their resulting suffering is illuminated through McCarthy's revelatory poems of historic distillation. Where most people would be content with mere sifting through the cinders to make sense of where we've ended up, McCarthy's linguistic acumen allows her – and us – to reinvent a consciousness in which traditional notions of time have become vestigial, but the vestigial has never been more timely.

Tracey McTague curates *The Battle Hill Reading Series*.

ANDREW HIMES, WITH JAN BULTMANN AND OTHERS, EDS.
*VOICES IN WARTIME:
THE ANTHOLOGY*
Whit Press/ 2005

Recently I discovered that I dislike movies. It took me 51 years to admit to myself – and now to you – that I find the major (only?) art form of our time annoying, with its speedy, ornamental glamor. And now, here arrives in my mailbox a movie in the form of a book! *Voices in Wartime*, a documentary by Rick King, has been transcribed and rendered into pages by Whit Press, of Seattle. (If only all movies were so transmuted!)

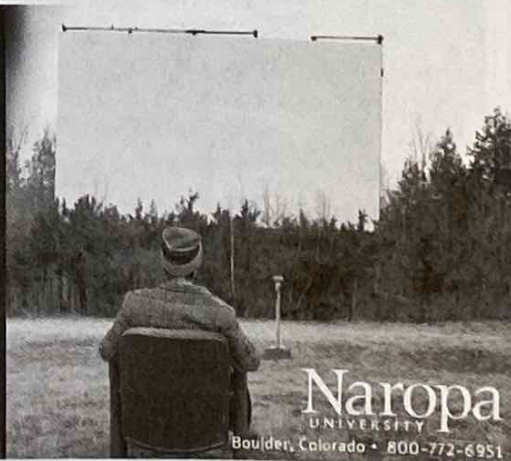
The movie interviews soldiers, scholars, psychiatrists, about war, and one theme that emerges is poetry. "Poetry has always been a part of war," says Chris Hedges, a former *New York Times* correspondent who reported from El Salvador, Kosovo and Kuwait. "In every war that I've covered, soldiers write poetry. I was with a battalion of Marines in the Persian Gulf War and a lance corporal had written a poem about making a phone call to his mother and hearing his mother cry on the

mind | motion

"Subject is known by what she sees.
Others can measure this vision by
what we see. Candor ends paranoia."
—Allen Ginsberg

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one of a set of possible parallel utterances:

here become itself & here (& there) of
adequate complexity

singing as the sign singing as 'dasein' assign the
singing to

& in yet another place, one might read
the extra space as a way of slowing the
mind down so that it can see the multiple
possibilities of the language:

you no more

dramatic than this car moving in & out of

shadows i love you & i have chosen wrong

As more information accrues to the previ-
ous utterance, its meaning & thus its emo-
tional content, begins to subtly shift: "you
no more dramatic than this car / this car
moving in & out / moving in & out of
shadows / of shadows i love / i love you /
i love you & i" But am I forcing this on
the poem? I cannot say. The poem itself,
"to give away the plot," seems to have in
it a death, which the poet through the
philosophical medium of the poem, is
attempting to come to grips with. This
leads the poem to a subtle, & yet persist-
ent, reflexivity. (It is also a poem about
writing poems.) Consider these lines:

scattered no more than a postmodern did you say
post mortem period piece

slipped messages into
oblique code of words

settled among them & learned their ways of saying
held as well

close to my own thinking / singing attuned to
invocation

stuck here waiting for the word the next word
the necessary

word not of my doing

a few certain sounds some rhythmic combination

among the infinite possible words

Perhaps here we have a clue to how we
might approach reading? Perhaps these
are not merely words & phrases that have
come to us from out of the writer's head,
but perhaps they have come to the writer
from some other place, & he is merely the
conduit through which they have passed
onto the page, & with our reading, into us.
Perhaps the words are ours, & their mean-
ings—their directions—are ours to deter-
mine for ourselves. I am happy here. I am
pleased with this book, that allows me to
read it as I will:

or drift

unimaginable narratives from into
which one much later rests & reconsiders & recollects

DglsN.Rothsjchld

LAURA MULLEN SUBJECT

Univ. of California Press / 2005

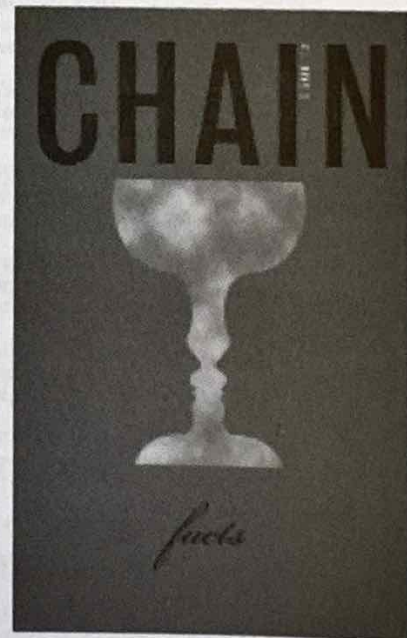
The cover illustration of Laura Mullen's
third book of poems, *Subject*, is as com-
pelling as its contents. It depicts a bird
hooked to 'un appareil enregistreur,' or
recording device which, by way of a seis-
mographic pen, tracks the bird's move-
ments in the air. The poems in this collec-
tion are equally concerned with making
the elusive palpable, or, as Mullen writes
in the poem "Assembly," with putting "a
pressure on the actual to reveal (betray,
both senses) its meaning." And she never
shies away from the difficulty surround-
ing this endeavor, of reaching persistently
for the definite.

The difficulty of this task lies not only in
applying pressure at the right moment but
also in locating the spaces where the
"actual" in fact resides. How it would be,
writes Mullen, "if you were going to
explain how to explain." Despite the chal-
lenge she sets before herself, Mullen puts
her finger on the kind of internal veloci-
ties a motion detector would surely miss.
Inso doing, she injects a new sense of
movement and weight to the familiar con-
cepts of "carrying a tune," "holding a
thought" and "arriving at a truth," bring-
ing the external physicality of the verbs
"carry," "hold" and "arrive" into the inter-
nal realm, while also highlighting the
fleeting stability of these words' mean-
ings.

On the one hand, the poems in *Subject* are
largely interested in the straddling of
states, in what occurs in the between,
demonstrated perfectly as: "that moment
when - / stalled reaching into the refrig-
erator, hand on / a further carton expiring
later - you hear both / the music they like
to play in back (the workers) / and the
music amplified in the store (for the / cus-
tomers)" But on the other hand, the unde-
finable boundaries of "in between" in
these poems make separating the internal
from the external, or the self from that
which is not the self, impossible.

In conveying experience we're all depen-
dent upon language. It is our public form
of transportation, a thing we all use, and
yet it is also the medium we employ to
express our most private selves. *Subject's*
poems hold that obtaining distance from
the self as subject in order to subject the
self to closer scrutiny yields similar diffi-
culties to those a sentence would
encounter, were it capable of parsing
itself. Mullen's use of parentheses in "pre-
tending (the subject) is not here" is either
a shining example of presence portraying
absence or absence portraying presence. I
can't decide. These are hybrid poems,
half silence and half speech, though the
omissions that abound in them exude
their own acoustics. "Can I rewind / the
real?" Mullen asks at one point, and then
answers her own question: "No." Maybe
not, but she *can* teem in the interim, and
so this is what she does, with unqualified
finesse.

Julie Reid



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