

# THE POETRY PROJECT

February/March 2018

Issue #254

# The Poetry Project

## Feb. / Mar. 2018 Issue #254

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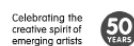
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**Cover image:** O Land (After Twain's *Innocents Abroad*) courtesy of the poet as the artist Philip Metres.

# Letter from the Director

The 44th Annual New Year's Day Marathon Benefit reading was another celebration of The Poetry Project's legacy, its future, collective agency, multigenerational (and inter-disciplinary) dialogue, and the present moment in poetry and the arts in NYC. Curating this high-energy mega-event for the past eleven years has been one of the highlights of my time as Director, and I will miss it. I do look forward to experiencing it next year as an audience member camped out with some cushions in the back. January 1 was a frigid Monday. Nonetheless you came out in droves and helped us raise \$24,000! These funds help us continue our work, and make sure poets get paid for theirs. Thank you so much to our 140 volunteers (the most we have ever had), to

just as many performers whose talent, humor, and vulnerability moved me, and reminded me to pay close attention to the ever present forces that try to convince us to retreat into more solipsistic realms. Lastly, I want to particularly acknowledge Poetry Project staff Nicole, Laura, and Simone for their creativity, stamina, and acumen behind the scenes. We have a great late winter season planned for you, and stay tuned for an equally exciting spring that will include a 3-day symposium, a master class with Ed Roberson, and another reading for the Racial Imaginary. Happy 2018 to all.

Stacy Szymaszek

# Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers,

Happy New Year! It's early January as we put this newsletter to press, so I can still say that and mean it. Big thanks to everyone who made the marathon possible (see: page 7 and a few photos of the big day on 5 and 8).

So thrilled to be able to feature these poets and artists. They are some of the hardest working ones I know:

1. Philip Metres graces the cover and gives us two poems on pages 10 and 22. If you haven't read *Sand Opera*, be a good citizen and order it **NOW** from Alice James Books. You're welcome.

2. Read Charleen McClure's poem on page 11 aloud. You might also want to cut it out and keep it in your wallet. Show it to people you care about.

3. If you don't yet know about Justin Phillip Reed, please get to reading this daring and inventive poet in advance of his full length debut, *INDECENCY*. I first heard him read the poem on page 14 during the Conversation Literary Fest and was left stunned and stung by its sound and its truth. It's necessary and I'm grateful to be able to share it with you all.

Roberto Montes, once again, tackles the complexity of this poet life in GRIEVANCES on page 12.

And as a response to the lack of intersectional resistance curation I see in the art world, I had to use this space to bring in the brilliant Leila Abdelrazaq. I highly recommend her graphic novels, *Baddawi* and *The Opening*.

While our reviewers enjoyed the holidays, John Rufo picked up the slack, nearly authoring an entire reviews section by himself! *Thank you, John!* We are lucky to have your voice and insights into these works. You don't want to miss it, starting on page 23, including a record review of, *Alice Notley: Live in Seattle* by Jason Merritt.

And last but not least, Jayson P. Smith, a beacon in our community, caught up with us about their experience as an Emerge-Surface-Be Fellow, check it out on page 30. You also want to make sure to attend their phenomenal reading series: NOMAD.

Grateful to all the contributors and you, the reader.

Until soon, mh.

EDITORS EMERITI: Ron Padgett 1972–1973 / Bill MacKay 1973–1975 / Ted Greenwald 1975–1977 / Frances LeFevre 1977–1978 / Vicki Hudspith 1978–1980 / Greg Masters 1980–1983 / Lorna Smedman 1983–1984 / Tim Dlugos 1984–1985 / James Ruggia 1985–1986 / Jessica Hagedorn 1986–1987 / Tony Towle 1987–1990 / Jerome Sala 1990–1991 / Lynn Crawford 1991–1992 / Jordan Davis 1992–1994 / Gillian McCain 1994–1995 / Mitch Highfill 1995–1996 / Lisa Jarnot 1996–1998 / Brenda Coultas & Eleni Sikelianos 1998–1999 / Katherine Lederer 1999–2000 / Ange Mlinko 2000–2002 / Nada Gordon & Gary Sullivan 2002–2003 / Marcella Durand 2003–2005 / Brendan Lorber 2005–2007 / John Coletti 2007–2009 / Corina Copp 2009–2011 / Paul Foster Johnson 2011–2013 / Ted Dodson 2013–2015 / Betsy Fagin 2015–2017

# Notes from the Project



M. Lamar and Joan La Barbara sing at the New Year's Day Marathon

# In Memoriam

**Tom Weigel 1948-2017**

**by Joel Lewis**

Tom Weigel, a poet, playwright, publisher and editor associated with what is retrospectively called the "3rd Generation" of New York Poets died October 18 at his home in the "Black Dirt Region" community of Chester, NY from lymphoma. He was 69. He was cared for during his illness by his sister Monica Claire Antonie, whose photographs of the Poetry Project in the 70s and 80s are a valuable documentation of that period and have been frequently used in the Poetry Project Newsletter.

For me, as a young poet arriving at the Project in the late seventies from atop the Palisades of New Jersey, Tom seemed a constant presence in the poetopolis of the Lower East Side. I'd buy copies of his magazine *Tangerine* at East Side Books. He published small chapbooks of downtown poets under the names of Andrea Doria books and The Full Deck Anthology. My workshop teacher, Maureen Owen published his chapbooks and taught them in class. Tom's dancer girlfriend, Jenny Salmon would periodically turn up in Alice Notley's legendary yearlong workshop that I dutifully attended. Tom, in fact, was the only one of my older colleagues to invite me to a party. It was a Halloween event in his East 6th Street crib and I met the legendary Jackie Curtis, best known today as part of Andy Warhol's group of "Superstars". Tom's memoir of Curtis, "Portrait of a Playwright: The Jackie Curtis Story" is a terrifically intimate document of cultural history that deserves a wider readership.

According to Monica, Tom got the poetry jones in his teen years; not content to submit poems to his high school's literary journal, he began publishing magazines with titles such as "Mind Inklings" in the family's basement in Northport, Long Island. Somehow he acquired a mimeo machine and pressed his sister into child labor of collating pages.

Tom moved to Manhattan in 1970 and one of the neighbors in his building was poet/filmmaker Piero Helcizer who put him and the Chicago poet, Jackie Disler, to work handing out fliers for his latest films. Afterwards, they all headed over to St. Mark's Poetry Project where Harris Schiff was hosting the Monday night open reading series and Harris signed them all up to read that night.

Tom married, left New York for Buffalo and later ended up on his bride's family farm where his father-in-law exempted him from farm work to allow him the time for his poetry and playwriting. Despite this rural 4F classification, Kentucky lacked a Gem Spa, Ukrainian dives and the lively art scene of the East Village in the 70's. Back in NYC to visit his sister, he dramatically threw his house keys overboard a Staten Island ferryboat and announced, "I'm not going back to Kentucky! I have to be part of this NY scene".

Tom read extensively in NYC during the 70s and 80s including The Ear Inn and The Museum of Modern Art. He also read on Belgrade radio while with the poet Nina



Tom Weigel reading at Poetry Project circa 1978

Zivancevic. He published over 12 volumes of poetry, staged plays, and appeared in magazines ranging from the *Paris Review* to *Skidrow Penthouse*. The most available volume being *Watch That Side* published by Accent Editions, which offers a terrific entry to his poetry, which I find manages to consistently finesse the difficult balancing act of off being both offhand and dead serious. His work is unprogrammatic and never allows the reader to anticipate what is waiting on the next line.

After the death of his brother along with downtown friends including Ted Berrigan, Jackie Curtis and Margo Howard Howard, Tom left Manhattan and ended up in New London, Connecticut, an old whaling town whose most famous literary resident was Eugene O'Neill. Tom found work at the local museum and began running a poetry reading series which grew a devoted group that saw Tom as a generous friend and a wise mentor. When health issues caused the move nearer to his sister in Chester, the Mayor of New London issued a proclamation thanking him for his contribution to the cultural life of his city.

Tom was a prodigious letter writer – he did not own a computer and was suspicious of online poetry. I received some of these missives, including copies of his latest magazine *Burp!* and feedback on poems that I had submitted. I must admit to have been out of practice in the art of physical correspondence, so was always a bit slow in responding. In my later contact with Tom, I was struck by his near religious devotion to poetry as a social act -- less what effect your writing has on the imaginary/potential audience than it has on yourself as the writer.

You live for the numbers  
& the numbers make you  
what you are OK  
then you finagle  
then you flutter flutter flutter  
(from *Watch That Side*)

# Notes from the Project

## MARATHON 2018 THANK YOU'S

The Poetry Project Staff would like to extend a great THANK YOU to all those who donated their time, effort, energy, food, beverages, and books to help us raise \$24,000 at the 44th Annual New Year's Day Marathon Reading. In addition to 135 performers and 145 volunteers (!!!), around 1,000 people showed up to celebrate the power of poetry. We are so appreciative and moved. Hope to see you all this 2018!

**Volunteers:** Adam O'Reilly, Adeena Karasick, Adjuva Greaves, Adrienne Raphel, Alexandra Sugarman, Andrew Gayle, Anna Gurton-Wachter, Anna Kreienberg, Annabel Lee, Ariel Goldberg, Arlo Quint, Ashley Fenstermaker, Atticus Fierman, Barbara Paulus, Batya Rosenblum, Becca Teich, Ben Fama, Betsy Fagin & Theo Fagin-Mackie, Bill Considine, Brenda Coultas, Brenda Iijima, Brendan Lorber & Aurora McTague-Lorber, Bridget Talone, Brooke Stanley, Caelan Nardone, Camille Rankine, Carol Nissen, Carolyn Ferrucci, Cat Tyc, Chaya Vaynshteyn, Cheryl Fish, Chloe Zimmerman, Chris Way, Christa Angelios, Cliff Fyman, Connie Mae Oliver, Conor Messinger, Cori Hutchinson, Dave Morse, David Kirschenbaum, David J McCarthy, David Wilk, David Satkowski, Davy Knittle, Diana Rickard, Dorothy Friedman August, Douglas Rothschild, EJ McAdams, Elinor Nauen, Elizabeth Sanzari, Emily Toder, Emilyn Kowaleski, Erica Hunt, Erika Hodges, Erin Nagle, Farnoosh Fathi, Filip Marinovich, Florence Kindel, Francesca DeMusz, Gabe Kruis, Gabriella Gonzales, Gabriella Rieger, Geoff Mottram, Hadley Gitto, Hailey Rozenberg, Hannah Tishkoff, Ian Dreiblatt, Ian Wilder, Jack Murray, Jackie Clark, Janna Dyk, Jeff Perkins, Jennifer Bartlett, Jennifer Nagle, Jillian McManemin, Jim Behrle, Jo Ann Wasserman, Jocelyn Kirsch, Joe Cosmo Cogen, John Barclay-Morton, John Coletti, John S Hall, John Kropa, Jon Allen, Jonathan Morrill, Josef Kaplan, Joshua Bianchi, Julia Barclay-Morton, Julie Turley, Katie Fowley, Katie Taylor, Katie Willingham, Katy Lederer, Karen Weiser and Sylvie Berrigan, erica kaufman, KB Jones, Kenyatta JP Garcia, Kevin Johnson, Kip Rose Miller, Kristin & Sophie Prevallet, Laura Nicoll, Laura Wilk, Laura Woltag, Linda Hayes, Lisa Rogal, Lisa Ozag, Lonely Christopher, Lynne DeSilva-Johnson, Maggie Zavgren, Marc Nasdor, Marcella Durand and Ismael, Marie La Vina, Marie-Helene Bertino, Mariette Lamson, Marlan Sigelman, Maryam Parhizkar, Maryjane Dunphy, Matt Longabucco, Matt Proctor, Maya Yu Zhang, Mel Elberg, Melissa Tolve, Meredith Starkman, Micaela Foley, Michael Honigberg, Myra Al-Rahim, Omotara James, Nada Gordon, Nat Roosa, Nina Puro, Olivia Grayson, Phoebe Lifton, Purvi Shah, Rachel Galperin, Rachel Valinsky, Sara Akant, Sarah Anne Wallen, Sarah Sarai, Sarah Safaie, Shane Hanlon, Shanxing Wang, Simi Best, Stephanie Gray, Sue Landers, Ted Dodson, Tenaya Nasser-Frederick, Terrence Arjoon, Tom Savage, Tracey McTague, Tyler Morse, Vera Linder, Viktorsha Uliyanova, and Will Edmiston

**Food Donors:** Two Boots Pizza, Veselka, Otto's Tacos, Sobaya, S'Mac, Porto Rico Coffee, Heather Dumond, Gillian McCain, Douglas Rothschild, and Bob Rosenthal and Don Yorty. And a very, very big thank you to Phil Hartman of Two Boots Pizza for expertly coordinating food and beverage donations for the third year in a row!

**Book Donors:** Akashic Books, Argos Books, Belladonna\*, BookThug, Lee Ann Brown, Burning Deck, City Lights Books, Coffee House Press, Commune Editions, Edge, Fence, Fewer & Further Press, Philip Foster, Futurepoem, Graywolf, Litmus, New Directions, Noemi Press, Operating System, Portable Press @ Yo-Yo Labs, Pressed Wafer, Rescue Press, Roof, Solid Objects, The Song Cave, Susan Mills Artist Books, Tender Buttons, Ugly Duckling Presse, United Artists / Angel Hair, Wave Books, Wesleyan, Wonder, and YesYes Books

**Audio:** James Barickman, Jim Behrle, Matty D'Angelo

**Lights:** Carol Mullins, Leo Janks

**Video:** Robert O'Haire

**Photography:** Ted Roeder

**Marathon Guest Hosts:** CA Conrad, Ariel Goldberg, Bob Holman, Patricia Spears Jones, Eileen Myles, Elinor Nauen, & Camille Rankine

**Additional Staff Support:** Mel Elberg, Judah Rubin

**Poster & Program Art:** KB Jones

# Notes from the Project



Nicole Sealey and Elizabeth Willis read at the New Year's Day Marathon



# February/March Workshops

## **Literary Feelings — Workshop with Jacqueline Waters**

**5 consecutive sessions: Thursdays, 7-9pm, begins February 8, 2018**

**Parish Hall, St. Mark's Church (131 E 10th St, New York, NY 10003)**

This workshop will focus on emotion and how it shows up in poetry. We'll look at the ways a poem can conjure, acknowledge or avoid feeling, and we'll draw on recent work in affect studies to help us locate the subtle, the overflowing and everything we can find a name for in between. We'll write in class and experiment with contemplative practices and exercises meant to illuminate the predicament of feelings in poetry. Our goal will be to gather some of this material into drafts for the final week of class. Writers we read might include Sara Ahmed, Lauren Berlant, Brian Blanchfield, Lucille Clifton, San Juan de la Cruz, Emily Dickinson, Aaron Kunin, Audre Lorde, Filip Marinovich, Bernadette Mayer, Shane McCrae, Bharata Muni, Precious Okoyomon, Ariana Reines, Jack Spicer and William Wordsworth.

**Jacqueline Waters** is the author of *Commodore* and *One Sleeps the Other Doesn't*, both from Ugly Duckling Presse. Her work has appeared recently in *Chicago Review*, *Dreamboat*, *Fanzine*, *Harper's*, *Little Star* and *The American Reader*.

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## **prosody, privatization, performance and peace — Workshop with Robert Kocik**

**10 consecutive sessions: Thursdays, 7-9pm, begins March 15, 2018**

**Parish Hall, St. Mark's Church (131 E 10th St, New York, NY 10003)**

*"The beat of a drum smites me through my chest to the shoulder blades. Every atom of my body is a vibroscope."*  
Helen Keller

Prosody is, by definition, perhaps the least isolable of phenomena. It can't manifest in the abstract, thus the workshop's live performative socioeconomic contextualization that makes us the matter as we speak. We'll hold an openness for how the sessions unfold, how the threads come together or fray. Openness itself occasions understanding. The research of Roshi Joan Halifax directly correlates heightened somatosensory attunement (vital to prosody) with greater capacity for empathy. Having been spoken into being, to respond with tone of voice moving us toward a world in which no one's potential will be wasted by violence.

**Readings will draw on:** Édouard Glissant, Pauline Oliveros, *Beautiful Painted Arrow* (Joseph Rael), Nagarjuna, Judith Butler, *mudita*, 4E cognition, Panini, Max Stirner, Saidiya Hartman, Michael Hudson, Josiah Warren, Fiona Templeton, *dzogchen*, M. NourbeSe Philip, *chöd*, Pindar, lawmaking as creative writing, Eleni Stecopoulos, Toni Morrison, *naad*, Cecilia Vicuña, vibrational medicine, Lucy Parsons, poet-designed built-environments, *dharmakaya*, Russell Maroon Shoatz, Dr. Nida Chenagtsang, Brigid McLeer, Machig Labdrön, adversarial readings of alt-right websites, William J. Barber, epigenetics, Layli Long Soldier, *endosymbiosis*, Charles Fourier, *cymatics*, Silvia Federici, and so on.

**Robert Kocik** is co-director and librettist for The Commons Choir. In 2008, with choreographer Daria Fain, he initiated an experiential field of research called *The Prosodic Body*. Publications include: *Over Coming Fitness* (Autonomea, 2000), *Rhurbarb* (Periplum Editions, 2007), *E-V- E-R- Y- O-N- E* (Portable Press at Yo-Yo Labs, 2012), and *Supple Science* (On Contemporary Practice, 2013). *mayday heyday parfait*, an investigative musical theater work, premiered at BRIC Arts in 2017. Current architectural work involves the designing of homes for people with multiple chemical sensitivities.

**The Poetry Project's workshops** have a reputation for being both rigorous, accessible, and affordable. Teachers, experienced writers, and new writers work together with a shared dedication to creating exciting poetry and exploring a wide range of literary genres, styles, and traditions. Due to a cap of 15 seats per workshop (unless otherwise noted), reservations are required and payment must be received in advance. Tuition for one 10-session workshop is \$275 and for one 5-session workshop is \$150 for the 2017 season. Tuition for one Master Class is \$95, or \$75 for students and seniors. If you are a student or senior, email [lh@poetryproject.org](mailto:lh@poetryproject.org) with a scan of your Student ID for a discount code. For more information or to learn about scholarships, visit [poetryproject.org/events/category](http://poetryproject.org/events/category).

# POETRY: Philip Metres

## Script (A Paleography for the Future)

--after Michal Rovner

we are written  
we are writhing  
living letters  
in liquid text

we are bowing  
we are rowing  
over water  
ant-black silent

film / still & yet  
fulfill some script  
each our bodies  
synching syntax

each pull threatens  
what has thread us  
into this crowd  
is there meaning

in the moaning  
we can quite hear  
ought we quiet  
breathing labor

ought we coax her  
is it death pangs  
is it birth throes  
she is rowing

over darkness  
she is writing  
living letters  
in a liquid next

---

**Philip Metres** has authored nine books of poetry and prose, including *Sand Opera* (2015). A recipient of the Lannan Fellowship and two Arab American Book Awards, he is professor of English and director of the Peace, Justice, and Human Rights program at John Carroll University.

# POETRY: Charleen McClure

## **gimme the loot**

grease the geese & gimme that good good  
gold spider in auntie's mouth crouched  
up high on the top shelf near that bag of coins yes  
i mean her tongue cash loaded—open  
the registry open the cell that door that  
lazarus walked through  
i want the money  
making grandma's skin fat pockets of air  
to share with the homies that bread  
where the ribcage splits like ships  
from the same port sternum on lung & lung  
on beat that vault that bank of bone  
sewn in the traffic of breath & flesh that bodies  
obey—if i ask  
start the car on everything i'd burn  
i expect fools to keep they hands off  
my sisterbrothercousinand'em i'm  
not asking i'm slipping the rolex off the wrist  
of History this ain't a game the flux and swerve  
law of paper states stacks on stacks on stacks  
past present & future  
in a braid like cane or corn cotton—  
pay me: every song  
is about my baby's mamas  
mamas mamas mamas mamas since always  
  
& forever in my mouth all of time  
all they eyes watching behind my teeth

---

**Charleen McClure** is from Atlanta by way of London. She is a graduate of Agnes Scott and Hunter College, receiving a Bachelor's in English-Literature and a Master's in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, respectively. She has received fellowships from The Conversation, US Callaloo Creative Writing Workshop, VONA, and Cave Canem. A 2016 Pushcart-nominee, she is also a Fulbright scholar. Her work has been published in *Muzzle*, *Mosaic*, *Kinfolks Quarterly*, and *African Voices*.

# GRIEVANCES

compiled from the social media of Roberto Montes

Dialogue isn't inherently helpful	They were somewhat considerate by sitting in the back	Very polite and gracious
You don't have to talk	But they were still noticeable	The In It to Win It poet
To those you don't want to	I'm unsure if this is obvious by now	Didn't really join our group
I was at a reading once	But I am a person with many feelings	They had their own (They always do)
With a poet who's In It to Win It	In this particular instance	It was a positive experience overall
I never had a good experience with this poet	I was pretty angry	Though I was somewhat ashamed of myself
But I tried to be polite	And drunk	That I allowed someone to affect me in that way
I have difficulty controlling my facial expressions	As the In It to Win It poet	The next day
But I hope I was polite	Continued to ignore the readers	The Poet who is In It to Win It
During the reading the poet who is In It to Win It	I became angrier and angrier	Messaged me on Facebook
Kept snickering with their friends	I am a quiet person	With a generic
Conspicuously playing on their phone	But a loud poet	"It was an honor to have read with you [...]"
While other poets were reading	So when it was my turn to read	But I stopped myself before reading more
The In It to Win It poet	I made sure to yell in their direction	Because something occurred to me
Like all In It to Win It poets	Even facing directly at them	Something brilliant and terrible occurred to me
Affected the demeanor of a literary figure	They did not deign to pretend	I didn't have to talk to this person
A romanticized literary figure	To pay attention to the reading	There was literally nothing in poetry
From a past that never actually existed	They were a part of	That compelled me to communicate with this person
Part of that is showing contempt where you can	Which angered me a great deal	And join in the fiction they were offering me
For particular people	And I admit in my pettiness	That they were not exceedingly rude
Specifically	When it was their turn to read	That one must still maintain ties at all costs
Those who are unable to help you in the way they want	I furiously devoted my attention to my phone	Because you never know when opportunity might arise
And there is only one thing they want	I didn't snicker with anyone	And like all of those who are In It to Win It
They want to Win	Or whisper loudly	This individual had their own thing
At this reading the In It to Win It Poet's	But I poured myself into my phone	They offered people
Snickering and fumbling continually distracted me	Filled it with my anger and pettiness	
	After the reading	
	I spoke to the poets I admired	
	Who were	
	Like most people	

# GRIEVANCES

compiled from the social media of Roberto Montes

It's always a reading series  
Or a poetry series  
Or a journal  
Etc.  
And so much of the poetry community  
Depends on us  
Opening lines of communication  
With those who can offer opportunities  
Regardless of who those people are  
This is what's known as  
"Being positive"  
It occurred to me at that moment  
That I did not have to "be positive"  
I am someone who hates confrontation  
So I did my duty

I was polite at the reading  
Other than when I furiously tried to download  
minesweeper on my phone  
But this second step  
This engaging with someone who's In It to Win It  
It wasn't that I couldn't do it  
It was that I didn't have to  
In fact  
The whole ordeal had nothing to do with poetry  
And yet how often  
We allow ourselves to believe  
Otherwise

--  
Roberto Montes's latest book is *Grievances*, The Atlas  
Review.

## NEW FROM LITMUS PRESS

### DAYDREAM

Jean Day

Jean Day's *Daydream* is brilliantly astute, imaginative, and keen—let us not be "deaf to its obvious aptness." Day's discerning eye-mind upturns the world we think we live in by pondering and questioning and inviting the reader to share in the pleasure of "beautiful problems, which / arise as toughened thought." This attention, curiosity, and reverent regard for our everyday surrounds—here local, there global—is the book's tuning fork. *Daydream* makes a meal "amid the nutritionless corn" of daily modern life. Where "So / much flowering is imitation," Day's writing blooms singularly.



—Alli Warren

2017 | \$15 | ISBN: 978-1-933959-36-8

### BRIDGE OF THE WORLD

Roberto Harrison

These writings surge as blinding alchemical tales, unified, by language wrought in a psychic molecular forge, their higher consciousness suffusing each phoneme, with this consciousness spontaneously rippling into lines, stanzas, whole poems, that leap into greater vision, thereby forming Roberto Harrison's *Bridge of the World*. Harrison charts his own emptiness not unlike a navigator transmuting the emptiness in himself, thereby helping clarify the inner workings for each reader, as he or she faces the daunting mystery that we occupy as beings.



—Will Alexander

2017 | \$15 | ISBN: 978-1-933959-33-7

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# POETRY: Justin Phillip Reed

## PUSHING UP ONTO ITS ELBOWS, THE TABLE LIFTS ITSELF INTO FACT.

after Tafisha Edwards

To disappear Black girls at a low volume of sustained public panic is to insinuate the inconstancy of Black girls. The disposability of Black girls who are prone to disappearance. A body bag somewhere waits with little hoopla about its lot. Absence becomes the lot of Black girls.

\_\_\_\_\_ will eventually accept as fact that absence becomes a lot of Black girls. In what becomes the normal day-to-day, Black girls are harder to find, \_\_\_\_\_ would think first, not that there are few attempts to find them. The question isn't whether or not Black girls often go missing: if no one else, Black girls miss each other.

\_\_\_\_\_ would be remiss to not recognize how everything is made less in the absence of Black girls, if \_\_\_\_\_ could miss what \_\_\_\_\_ have never been required to recognize, such as:

Unlike missing Black girls, taking Black girls is a Western custom. It seems likely that such a statement will soon appear inaccurate: the white space in new textbook editions will have nothing to say about it, if the white spaces behind those textbooks have anything to say about it. That Black girls are quintessential American palimpsests is not a question but an anxiety. \_\_\_\_\_ would rather forget that Black girls were made receptacles for what the authors of *Liberty and Independence* would not speak. That *Liberty and Independence* were imaginable only in the absent-presence of taken Black girls, enslaved Black girls, Black girls on whom a foundational economic system so depended that white men would kill each other and take taken Black girls.

The constancy of Black girls is someone's anxiety. The soil is thick with hidden Black girls, the myth that only quiet Black girls are worthwhile Black girls. The soil turns as \_\_\_\_\_ turn away from loud Black girls and their cacophonous insistence on Black girls.

\_\_\_\_\_ have not insisted enough upon the fact of Black girls, are often loudly shocked to find Black girls disappeared. Loud, unsustainable shock has a way of disappearing Black girls. Outrage, too, has a way of being disappeared.

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**Justin Phillip Reed** was born and raised in South Carolina. His work has appeared in *Best American Essays*, *Boston Review*, *Callaloo*, *The Kenyon Review*, *Obsidian*, and elsewhere. Coffee House Press will release his first full-length poetry collection, *Indecency*, in Spring 2018. Justin lives in St. Louis. Come see about him at [justinphillipreed.com](http://justinphillipreed.com).

# ART: Leila Abdelrazaq







# ART: Leila Abdelrazaq



يتم تدريب الشرطة الامريكية بشكل دوري في اسرائيل على تكتيكات "لمحاكاة الارهاب". رئيس شرطة سانت لويس السابق كان من المشاركين في هذه الدورات في العام ٢٠١١. كل تكتيكات الجيش التي تم استعمالها ضد المتظاهرين الفلسطينيين في الاراضي المحتلة تم تصديرها لتستعمل على المتظاهرين السود في امريكا.



AMERICAN POLICE OFFICERS ARE ROUTINELY SENT ON TRIPS TO ISRAEL TO RECEIVE TRAINING IN MILITARY "ANTI-TERROR" TACTICS. THE FORMER CHIEF OF THE ST. LOUIS POLICE DEPARTMENT PARTICIPATED IN ONE OF THESE TRAININGS IN 2011. THAT MEANS THE VERY TACTICS BEING DEVELOPED AND USED AGAINST PALESTINIAN PROTESTORS IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES ARE EXPORTED AND USED AGAINST PROTESTORS IN THE UNITED STATES.

# ART: Leila Abdelrazaq



**Leila Abdelrazaq**  
Detroit, Michigan

## ARTIST STATEMENT

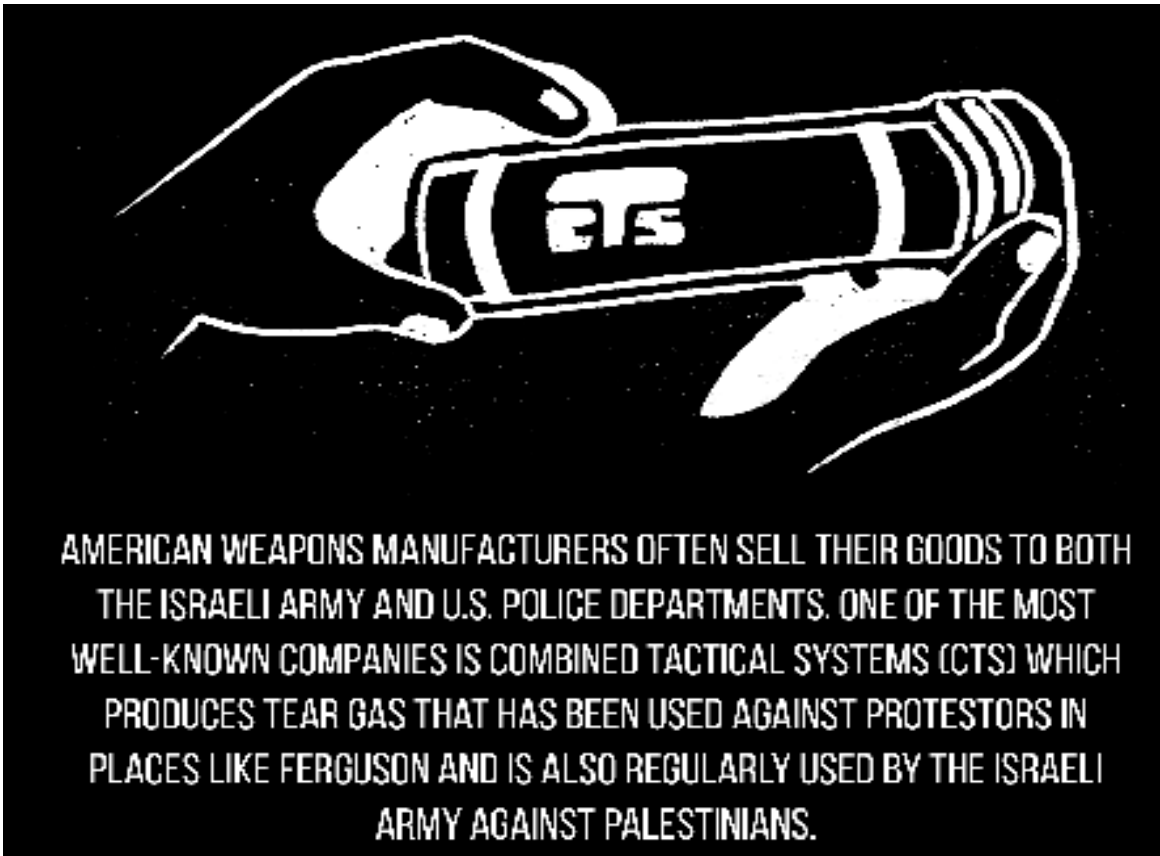
The **#Arabs4BlackPower series** was the visual component of an online effort meant to express solidarity with the Movement for Black Lives. After the release of the M4BL platform, which explicitly expressed solidarity with the Palestinian people, Palestinian and Arab organizers around the United States felt the need to reciprocate, and to do more work mobilizing against anti-Blackness in the Arab community. #Arabs4BlackPower released our own statement, and I began printing t-shirts with the phrase. I also created a print series that drew concrete connections between racialized and militarized police brutality in the United States and in Palestine.

*all images courtesy of the artist*

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Leila is a Detroit-based Palestinian author and artist. Her debut graphic novel, *Baddawi* (Just World Books 2015) was shortlisted for the 2015 Palestine Book Awards and has been translated into three languages. She is also the author and Illustrator of *The Opening* (Tosh Fesh, 2017) as well as a number of zines and short comics. Her creative work primarily explores issues related to diaspora, refugees, history, memory, and borders. Leila has been involved in organizing in various capacities since 2011, and integrates art making into her organizing work. She is also the founder of Bigmouth Press & Comix.

# ART: Leila Abdelrazaq



# Calendar of Events

All events begin at 8pm unless otherwise noted. Admission \$8/Students & Seniors \$7/ Members \$5 or free. The Poetry Project is wheelchair accessible with assistance and advance notice. For more detailed information about St. Mark's and accessibility, visit [poetryproject.org](http://poetryproject.org) or call 212.674.0910.

## FRI 2/2

### Maryam Monalisa Gharavi & Sowon Kwon

**Maryam Monalisa Gharavi** is an artist, poet, and theorist whose work explores the interplay between aesthetic and political valences in the public domain. Book publications include a translation of Waly Salomão's *Algarvias: Echo Chamber* (nominated for a 2017 PEN Award for Poetry in Translation), the poetry volume *The Distancing Effect*, and the drawing/text artist publication *Apparent Horizon 2*. Bio is forthcoming from Inventory Press in 2018.

**Sowon Kwon** works in a range of media including sculptural and video installations, animation, drawing, printmaking, artist books, and writing. Kwon's solo exhibitions include coffee table comma books at Full Haus Gallery, Los Angeles; average female (Perfect) at Matrix/University of CA Berkeley Art Museum; Two or Three Corridors at The Whitney Museum (formerly at Phillip Morris, now Altria).

## MON 2/5

### Fall Workshop Reading

Participants of The Poetry Project's Fall 2017 writing workshops, led by **Yoshiko Chuma**, **Farnoosh Fathi**, and **Tracie Morris** will gather to read work they produced.

## WED 2/7

### David Buuck & Zoe Tuck

**David Buuck** is the co-founder and editor of *Tripwire*, a journal of poetics, and founder of *BARGE*, the Bay Area Research Group in *Enviro-aesthetics*. Recent books include *Noise in the Face of*, *SITE CITE CITY*, and *An Army of Lovers*, co-written with Juliana Spahr. A new chapbook, *The Riotous Outside*, is forthcoming from Commune Editions in 2018.

**Zoe Tuck**, author of *Terror Matrix*, has co-taught the class *Vampire Poetics* at the Bay Area Public School with Laura Moriarty, and a class on ghosts with Zach Ozma.

## MON 2/12

### Caitie Moore & Gala Mukomolova

**Caitie Moore's** writing engages her white femme subject position and can be found online at *Harriet*, *BOMB*, *Queen Mobs*, in her chapbook *Wife*, *The Racial Imaginary: Writers on Race and the Life of the Mind* and various scattered publications. A collaboration with Dot Devota, *Dept. of Posthumous Letters*, was released in

November 2017.

**Gala Mukomolova** earned an MFA from the University of Michigan. Her work has appeared in the *PEN*, *POETRY*, *PANK*, *VINYL* and elsewhere. In 2016 Mukomolova won the 92nd Street Y Discovery/Boston Review Poetry Prize. Her first chapbook, *One Above / One Below* is forthcoming from Yes Yes Books.

## WED 2/14

### Andrea Lawlor & Rachel Zolf

**Andrea Lawlor's** writing has appeared in various literary journals including *Ploughshares*, *Mutha*, *the Millions*, *jubilat*, *the Brooklyn Rail*, *Faggot Dinosaur*, and *Encyclopedia*, Vol. II. Their publications include a chapbook, *Position Papers*, and a novel, *Paul Takes the Form of a Mortal Girl*.

**Rachel Zolf's** five books of poetry include *Janey's Arcadia*, *Neighbour Procedure and Human Resources*, all from *Coach House Books*, and a *Selected Poetry* is forthcoming. She is nearing completion of a theoretical text called *A Language No One Speaks: The Dangerous Perhaps of Monstrous Witness*.

## FRI 2/16

### Christopher Rey Pérez & Pedro Neves Marques

**Christopher Rey Pérez** is a poet working from within a matrix of opaque folklore, violence, and language. His first full-length book, *gauguin's notebook*, was published by &NOW Books, and his writing has also featured most recently in magazines and exhibitions such as *diSONARE*, *The Brooklyn Rail*, *Terra Mediterranea: In Action*, and *You really know where you are*.

**Pedro Neves Marques** is a writer, visual artist, and filmmaker. He is the editor of the anthology *The Forest and The School / Where to Sit at the Dinner Table?* and the author of two short-story books, most recently *Morrer na América*. Together with artist Mariana Silva, he runs *inhabitants*, an online channel for exploratory video and documentary reporting.

## WED 2/21

### Diana Arterian & Anna Vitale

**Diana Arterian** is the author of *Playing Monster :: Seiche*, the chapbooks *With Lightness & Darkness and Other Brief Pieces*, *Death Centos*, and co-editor of *Among Margins: Critical & Lyrical Writing*

on *Aesthetics*. Her poetry, essays, and translations have appeared in *Asymptote*, *BOMB*, *Black Warrior Review*, *Boston Review*, *Denver Quarterly*, and *Los Angeles Review of Books*, among others.

**Anna Vitale** is the author of *Detroit Detroit*, *Different Worlds*, and several chapbooks including *Unknown Pleasures*. Recent writing has appeared or is forthcoming in *BathHouse Journal*, *Columbia Poetry Review*, *Jacket2*, and *Supplement*. She lives in Brooklyn and hosts the *Tenderness Junction* on WFMU.

## MON 2/26

### TALK — HOLDING FORGOTTEN READERS CLOSE: Four Black Women Reflect on African-American Literary Community.

Black Scholar-Librarians on Elizabeth McHenry's *Forgotten Readers: Recovering the Lost History of African American Literary Societies* (Duke University Press, 2002).

**Olaronke Akinmowo** is a Bed-Stuy born visual artist, cultural scholar, yoga teacher, set decorator, and mom. In 2015 she started The Free Black Women's Library, an interactive roving biblio-installation that holds a collection of 900 books written by Black women. This social art project also features performances, workshops, readings, film screenings, and critical conversations.

**Adjua Gargi Nzinga Greaves** is an artist chiefly concerned with postcolonial ethnobotany working in mediums of scholarship, performance, corporeal wisdom, archival gesture, and language. Greaves has been published in *The Black Earth Institute's About Place Journal*, *The Recluse*, *The Poetry Project Newsletter*, and *No, Dear*. In 2017 *Belladonna\** published her first chaplet — *Close Reading As Forestry*.

**Lytic Hunter** is a writer from New York City. Her chapbooks include *Motherwort* and *Swallow*. Her work has also appeared in *Pelt Vol. 4: Feminist Temporalities*, *The Felt*, *Poems by Sunday*, *Belleville Park Pages*, and *Arava Review*.

**Jhani Miller** is an award winning scholar hailing from the University of Illinois School of Information Science. Her work relates to black femme identity, emotional health, and social influence. When she isn't advocating for historically marginalized groups in libraries, she's an aerial performer, lo-fi photographer, and geek culture researcher. You can find her at the Brooklyn Public Library where she is the Library Information Supervisor.

### WED 2/28

#### John Godfrey & Camille Rankine

**John Godfrey** is the author of 14 collections of poetry, including *The City Keeps: Selected and New Poems 1966-2014*. He has received fellowships from the General Electric Foundation (1984), the Foundation for Contemporary Arts (2009), and the Z Foundation (2013). He retired in 2011 after 17 years as a nurse clinician in HIV/AIDS.

**Camille Rankine** is the author of *Incorrect Merciful Impulses*, published in 2016 by Copper Canyon Press, and the chapbook *Slow Dance with Trip Wire*, selected by Cornelius Eady for the Poetry Society of America's 2010 New York Chapbook Fellowship. She serves on the Executive Committee for VIDA: Women in Literary Arts, chairs the board of The Poetry Project, and teaches at The New School and Hampshire College.

### FRI 3/2

#### Writing Translation: Katrina Dodson, Aditi Machado, & Anna Moschovakis

**Katrina Dodson** is a writer and a translator from the Portuguese. Her translation of Clarice Lispector's *The Complete Stories* won the 2016 PEN Translation Prize and other awards. Dodson is a mentor in the Mills College MFA in Translation Program and holds a PhD in Comparative Literature from the University of California, Berkeley with a dissertation on Elizabeth Bishop in Brazil.

**Aditi Machado** is the author of *Some Beheadings* and translator of Farid Tali's *Prosopopoeia*. Her writing has also appeared in chapbook form and in journals like *Volt*, *Jacket2*, *Western Humanities Review*, and *World Literature Today*, among others. She lives in Denver and edits poetry in translation for *Asymptote*.

**Anna Moschovakis'** books of poetry include *They and We Will Get Into Trouble for This and You and Three Others Are Approaching a Lake*, and her translations include books and texts by Annie Ernaux, Albert Cossery, Claude Cahun, Jean-Luc Nancy, Pierre Alféri, Samira Negrouche, and Robert Bresson. Her first novel, *Eleanor, or The Rejection of the Progress of Love*, will be published in summer 2018.

### WED 3/7

#### Evening with Kimberly Drew

Please visit [poetryproject.org](http://poetryproject.org) for more info.

### WED 3/14

#### Release Reading for Joan Murray's Drafts, Fragments, and Poems: The Complete Poetry

Joan Murray died in 1942 due to a congenital heart condition at the age of 25. Her poems left an impression, particularly on W.H. Auden, who awarded her the 1946 Yale Younger Poets prize a few years after her death. Editor of this volume published by *New York Review of Books*, Farnoosh Fathi, has restored the poems published in 1947, edited by Grant Code, to something much closer to their original form and compiled many of Murray's letters and previously unpublished poetry. With **Monica de La Torre, Shanna Compton, Katie Fowley, Darcie Dennigan, and Farnoosh Fathi**.

### FRI 3/16

#### Celina Su & Cecilia Vicuña

**Celina Su's** first book of poetry, *Landia*, was published by Belladonna\* in 2018. Her writing also includes two poetry chapbooks, three books on the politics of social policy and civil society, and pieces in journals such as *n+1*, *Harper's*, and *Boston Review*. Su is the Marilyn J. Gittell Chair in Urban Studies and an Associate Professor of Political Science at the City University of New York. She was born in São Paulo, Brazil, and lives in Brooklyn.

**Cecilia Vicuña** is a poet, artist, filmmaker, and activist who lives and works in Chile and New York. Born and raised in Santiago de Chile, she has been in exile since the military coup in the early 1970s. In Chile she founded the legendary *Tribu No* in 1967, a group that created anonymous poetic actions. In 1974, exiled in London, she co-founded *Artists for Democracy* to oppose dictatorships in the Third World.

### MON 3/19

#### Mahogany L. Browne & Aricka Foreman

**Mahogany L. Browne** The Cave Canem, Poets House & Serenbe Focus alum, is the author of several books including *Redbone*, *Dear Twitter: Love Letters Hashed Out On-line*, recommended by Small Press Distribution & About.com Best Poetry Books of 2010. She is an Urban Word NYC Artistic Director, founder of Women Writers of Color Reading Room, Program Director of BLM@Pratt and facilitates performance poetry and writing workshops throughout the country.

**Aricka Foreman** is a poet, editor and educator from Detroit, MI. Her poems, essays and curation have appeared in *The Offing*, *Buzzfeed*, *Vinyl*, *RHINO*, *The*

*Blueshift Journal*, *Day One*, *shuf Poetry*, *James Franco Review*, *THRUSH*, *Please Excuse This Poem: 100 New Poems for the Next Generation*, among others. Author of the chapbook *Dream with a Glass Chamber*, she has received fellowships from Cave Canem, Callaloo, and the Millay Colony for the Arts.

### WED 3/21

#### Release Reading for From Our Hearts to Yours: New Narrative as Contemporary Practice

Join us for the east coast launch of *From Our Hearts to Yours: New Narrative as Contemporary Practice* (published by ON Contemporary Practice), the first comprehensive anthology of essays on New Narrative writing and community practices written primarily by a younger generation of poets and poet-scholars. With editors **Rob Halpern and Robin Tremblay-McGaw**, and contributors **Thom Donovan, Ariel Goldberg, Ted Rees, Kathy Lou Schultz, Brian Teare, Trace Peterson, Kaplan Harris** and others.

### FRI 3/23

#### Dia Felix & Litia Perta

**Dia Felix** is the author of the poetry book *YOU YOU YOU* (Projective Industries, 2017) and the Lambda-nominated *Nochita* (City Lights/Sister Spit, 2014). She curates the reading series *GUTS* at Dixon Place, works at the The Metropolitan Museum of Art as a video shooter/editor, and lives in East Harlem.

**Litia Perta** is interested in transformation, and in collaborating to develop innovative ways (pedagogical, linguistic, theoretical, economic, spiritual and poetic) to support the transformations we came here to live through. Recent work is included in the group exhibition *Ours is a City of Writers* at the Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery as well as in the inaugural issue of *Sublevel Magazine*.

### MON 3/26

#### Che Gossett & Hieu Minh Nguyen

**Che Gossett** is a black trans femme writer, perhaps best described as a theory queen cruising in the end times.

**Hieu Minh Nguyen** is the author of *This Way to the Sugar* which was a finalist for both a Minnesota Book Awards and a Lambda Literary Awards. His next collection *Not Here*, is forthcoming from Coffee House Press in spring 2018. A queer Vietnamese American poet, Hieu is a Kundiman fellow and a poetry editor for *Muzzle Magazine*.

# POETRY: Philip Metres

## WHEN THE THINGS OF THIS WORLD REVEAL THEMSELVES TO BE FLOTATION DEVICES

vividriver	unboundsound	watergathered	roweddown
birdherd	loudoudcloud	branchward	boughbowed
fieldsunveiled	cicadastatic	sunsetsailed	cricketracket
hideinside	verserehearsed	emberedbed	glimmerimmersed
slinksilk	featherbreath	tranquilquilt	featherbreath
slowstroke	swimskin	breathsmoke	swimskin
huglitter	hearheat	huglitter	hairheat
lashedeyes	fleshleaf	sighrise	heatwreath
rafterlaughter	rafterlaughter	riverspool	laughterafter
spoonspoon	leapsleep	dreamscene	vividriver

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**Philip Metres** has authored nine books of poetry and prose, including *Sand Opera* (2015). A recipient of the Lannan Fellowship and two Arab American Book Awards, he is professor of English and director of the Peace, Justice, and Human Rights program at John Carroll University.

## LETTER FROM REVIEWS EDITOR JOHN RUFO:

In our previous newsletter, we published an array of review “correspondences” between poets; here, we want to listen to the echo of such letters in order to pay closer attention to the spaces within which they fall. Buildings, plans, skylines, scroll-manuscripts, backseats, and record players all have a role to play within these pages. The reviews in this issue of *The Poetry Project Newsletter* begin by contemplating *Mount Carmel & The Blood of Parnassus*, a new work by Anaïs Duplan. Duplan’s strange and powerful poetry and prose sets the stage for several encounters between performance, survival, music, dogs, and improvised writing.

Luckily, Duplan isn’t alone in thinking and feeling through such entanglements, and the corners provided in the *Newsletter* allows us to consider how three other poets are also following practices which allow for insights into refiguring space. Saretta Morgan’s spare and elegiac *Room for a Counter Interior* settles into a meditative arena which is both deeply thoughtful and improvisatory, where we see how thinking itself demands and depends upon extemporaneous movements. The building-space is rewired in time throughout the selected poems of Marilyn Buck, published under the title *Inside/Out*, the majority of which was written during Buck’s time as a political prisoner in the United States. Finally, Jason Merritt clues us into hearing through an Alice Notley record (!), where the performance site of Seattle crawls into our stereos, a series of Notley’s poems and questions+answers crowding our attention.

All of these poets practice different

models for everyday arrangements and alternate architectures. They keenly contemplate templates of sway and timbre, rise and fall of ground, modes of live writing. One might be tempted to call all of this geographic poetry or geographic writing: it might also be dubbed earth listening. We have to listen and heed how space itself hears. If you would like to send a review for a future issue, please query: [reviews.ppnl@poetryproject.org](mailto:reviews.ppnl@poetryproject.org)

John Rufo

**John Rufo’s** materials have been published, or are forthcoming, on *Poets [dog] org*, *Ploughshares*, *The Capilano Review*, *The Offing*, the *Journal Petra*, *Tagvverk*, *Dreginald*, and elsewhere. More information and contact: [johnspringrufo.tumblr.com](https://johnspringrufo.tumblr.com)

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### **Anaïs Duplan’s *Mount Carmel & The Blood of Parnassus* (Monster House Press, 2017) Review by John Rufo**

The only time I ever traveled to Iowa was to visit Anaïs Duplan. See, they said, pulling out a giant scroll of white paper, scratched and scrawled with handwriting, I’ve been working on this new thing. I don’t know what it is yet. They held it upright, above their face, with the paper so long that it began unraveling on the floor: its unruly, untitled form licking Duplan’s feet without ceasing, not unlike Chester, their dog, who has more than one cameo in the scroll. This paper, through an editing process of which I don’t know the exact details, eventually emerged as a work entitled *Mount Carmel & The Blood of Parnassus*.

In an interview with *The Rumpus*, Duplan mentions that the original un-edited form does not appear as the final manifestation of the work; however, with a careful eye for preserving its looseness and flow, Duplan successfully maintains an arrangement throughout *Mount Carmel* that allows us to feel its improvisatory bursts and fissures. It is never landlocked, but continually churns out into the sea and back again, basking in a circulation which Duplan reminds us can never be removed from its time of writing, remarking:

“I don’t care if my chapbook / isn’t published. I don’t care if it isn’t really that good.” Often, what seems to bind together the work is knowing its crude “inappropriateness” – where we’re told: “It would be a / mistake to publish this. You love mis- / takes.”

But instead of a misfire or awkward encounter, we get a series of takes (versions) and trials going after how Duplan regards “the poetry world,” Blackness, music, and familial relationships. It’s a deep, abiding love for the mistakes/misnomers that crop up in every arena, every zone where sociality is set to reset and grow.

In each instance, *Mount Carmel & The Blood of Parnassus* shakes itself alive and dry, though willing to comb through the waves once more if need be. What I mean is: the chapbook feels like a metamorphic process of traveling into the sun, without neglecting the places that held its position before. The first section [white ink on black pages] reveals itself as a personal memento concerning Duplan’s gender, sexual, and racial identities that doubly serves as “A Love Song to Dean Blunt in Three Parts.” See, you can never really talk about that without also talking about the music. The second section [black

# New Omnidawn Fall Poetry



**Laynie Browne** *You Envelop Me*

6" x 9" 112 pages 978-1-63243-038-0 \$17.95

"We read these poems & see Browne's brilliant mind at work—the song & the psalm of thought, of mourning, of living, of divination, of figuring out."—Pattie McCarthy



**Ewa Chrusciel** *Of Annunciations*

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"Chrusciel...considers notions of exile, migration, and spiritual devastation....Readers are reminded that we are like the disposed refugees (and their oppressors)...The effectiveness of Chrusciel's poetics of witness is impossible to deny."—Publishers Weekly



**Hillary Gravendyk** *The Soluble Hour*

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"What makes this collection magnetic is the measured way that Leung unpacks his own roles—witness, outsider, American, and translator—in the Hong Kong protests."—Publishers Weekly



**Laura Neuman** *Risk :: Nonchalance*

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**Craig Santos Perez** *from unincorporated territory [lukao]*

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"Centered on the birth of his daughter, this collection is first and foremost a family story and creation tale, albeit one in which the details of Guam's ecological and cultural degradation, American militarism and capitalism, and the diaspora of the Chamorro people and language continue to play an important part."—Publishers Weekly



**kathryn l. pringle** *Obscenity for the Advancement of Poetry*

6" x 9" 104 pages 978-1-63243-042-7 \$17.95

"Pringle...argues that systemic oppression is written onto the body, that people are born into violence and otherness through language."—Publishers Weekly



**Joseph Rios** *Shadowboxing*

6" x 9" 104 pages 978-1-63243-043-4 \$17.95

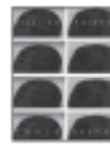
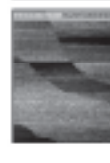
"Rios draws readers into a combination coming-of-age story and satire of academic pretension in his audacious debut, writing through the figure of a Chicano adolescent (and presumably alter ego)."—Publishers Weekly



**Susan Terris** *Take Two: Film Studies*

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# Reviews

ink on white pages] becomes a manifesto exercise in continuous serial poetic movement, surfacing negative space and cruising the duties of a “published poet” while, at the same time, smashing and seceding from said duties. While I’ve described the first section as “memento” and the following parts as “manifesto,” the two could be used interchangeably: the book is a promise to “keep this page for your record” and a declaration that “all marginalized people inhabit two worlds at the same time: freedom and unfreedom.” Duplan’s duties that they assign themselves are numerous and bountiful: this is a book that seems to travel in all directions at once, and levies the microphone to every murmur.

In this way, I want to put Duplan’s work in conversation with a conversation between poets Nathaniel Mackey and Kamau Brathwaite, where the latter writer insists on “tidialectics” instead of “dialectics,” where the motion and movement of water, ceaseless seizing and heaving sea, becomes the operating metaphor in the place of binaristic opposition. Though Duplan’s title is bifurcated, the “&” instead is like the sandy part of “ampersand” – the temper and timbre of grainy rock that collaborates with the tide, makes endless meeting times and places, instead of forces at war with one another. Mount Carmel is the holy site where the blood of Parnassus may abide. And, at the same time, they may never touch. A lot of the book seems to ask, “How do you talk about this?” And then answers in a multiplication of senses. Can we really talk about race/gender/family/poetry in a way that presupposes two opposites and sits somewhere along a line? This is, maybe, why Duplan writes: “I wanted you to cry into me.” We need to abide somewhere in the field of the earth instead of

regulating ourselves to a linear sensibility within the world. More specifically, and keeping Mackey and Brathwaite’s practices in mind, Duplan’s site of thinking space is that of Black privacy. Dean Blunt becomes the principal material personed specter for this reason. A “third space,” which is an “intensification, or deepening, of mundane reality” is another phrase Duplan uses in an attempt to describe how male-ness and Blackness twist and turn about their shapes. This space is the “possibility for liberation” and also the possibility of libation, of drinking and of offering “performance as lived reality...at the stage of one’s skin.” In moving away from either/or, and by consulting the comedian/performer Eric Andre, Duplan is wrestling/resting/re-arranging the elements that seek to keep things and persons still and at bay. What is the mundane? What is the everyday? Duplan queries and states: “are you tired. Yes, everyday.” And then goes on to relate: “Chester wags his tale / everytime I LAAAAAUGH!” The world where waiting on a paycheck and laughing at your dog’s tail and violence against Black persons occurs and the mundane continually recycles are all inhabiting the same earth. Anaïs calls us up the mountain, and digs deep into it. It’s a DJ set they invite us to dive into.

There are two more moments I want to draw up from the book: “I hesitated to begin writing” and “I wanted to be the men I dated more than I wanted to date them.” These desires, and their relevant, accompanying, before-and-after hesitations, are where I put the book down, bring it back, continue, and rewind. What feels through *Mount Carmel & The Blood of Parnassus* is an endless hesitation being hewn and lived through: a kind of vocabulary

developed to begin the process of something deeper than resolution. It’s not that Duplan provides us with a drama, but instead invokes/ involves us within the drama of thresholds and holding onto ourselves while simultaneously giving up ourselves. It is why, halfway through, between sections, they write: “Let us enter this again.” A process of re-entries, of entries, of “keep[ing] this page as a record.” Just now, as I am writing this, I am trying to record my writing of this, of my writing of my reading of my hesitations and beginnings and allowances. “Ecstatic union,” Duplan calls it. “Do you believe in that?”

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**Saretta Morgan’s *Room for a Counter Interior* (Portable Press @ Yo-Yo Labs, 2017)  
Review by John Rufo**

Saretta Morgan, from an interview with Joey de Jesus and Muriel Leung in *Apogee*, describes her performances involving text in the following way:

“...the work is sparse and depends on accumulation over time and on the willingness of a reader to accept the deferment of sense-making. Perhaps indefinitely?”

What would the (perhaps) indefinite deferment of sense-making entail? What would it be asking of the reader? What would it be asking of the performer/writer? And how might this deferment of “making-sense” be related to time and space, where “the work is sparse and depends on accumulation over time”? One way that Morgan guides us through these questions, without necessarily providing answers or be-all-end-all meanings, is through the creation and investigation of rooms.

# Reviews

These are rooms which are set aside for the imaginative purpose of the “counter interior,” as well as “real” rooms that we might travel into and through. There is the room of Forest Hills Cemetery; the room of Harvard University’s “carpenter center;” the motel room the speaker shares with their “favorite aunt;” the room of club café for a “three-whiskey lunch... with ariel;” the room of “his mother’s laugh...her bare feet dancing in the aisles.” These different spaces abound and ring through one another through thirty some pages.

I don’t think *Room for a Counter Interior*, Morgan’s newest chapbook, consists of a series of sets with finished touches, but it does provide the reader with a few of these structural possibilities. The text itself is made up of three

numbered, untitled parts or rooms or interiors: the first consists of describing “four principles;” the second discusses “four elegies;” and the last section, maybe, is where principle and elegy glide into the space between Harvard University and Forest Hills Cemetery. Before this last section, there is a quotation from Hortense Spillers describing the different situations of violences faced by enslaved Black women. And at the end of the text, we read: “room for a counter interior is an elaboration on an extemporaneous performance given on April 18th, 2017.”

I want to think about the extemporaneity of the text coupled with Saretta Morgan’s idea of her work also accumulating over time, since the latter remark might suggest a slow movement

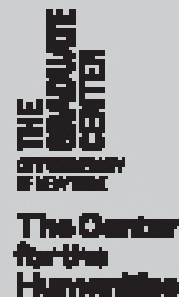
and the first instance bringing a “quicker” iteration to bear. I think in both instances, instead, there’s a kind of unfolding happening in Morgan’s work, which is itself a refolding of meaning and relation. If the first version of this text was an extemporaneous performance, and this text is an elaboration on that performance, how do we think about a writing upon an improvisation? Or an improvisation upon an improvisation? We have to think not just in terms of spontaneity or calculation, but something that instead revolves around how all planning involves unplanning and vice versa. Morgan’s work here might be something along the lines of a line in Renee Gladman’s Ravicka novels, where “spaces moan.” The architectural layout gives us the elegy and the song allows us to imagine the room(s).

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It might also be something along the lines of Ruth Wilson Gilmore's lines in discussing "Abolitionist geography," where the imagination has to play a key role in counter-development. Morgan writes: "what if the room were a state in constant motion. as geography." The constant motion of a set scenario is something we're trained out of realizing and recognizing. We have to imagine the vibrations that are already there, already present, pressing against our feet. In this way, the line in a later section about "her bare feet dancing in the aisles" becomes an imaginative recognition.

If I sound a little abstract or obtuse talking about *Room for a Counter Interior*, it's only because I don't think I can really enter its pages with anything other than an aspiration to re-learn. Morgan needles at the need for "sense-making" and draws together various possibilities. Its first lines: "what if there were a room. or if there weren't." We need to make a resolution to never stand still in order to realize the "what if" and the "if there weren't" together. In this way, "further principals become unnecessary": firstly, there is no first thing, no primary principal, only principles. The foundation made is the disruption of foundation; the founding of an un-founding; the found footage of ad lib, off the cuff. The library of the earth is Saretta Morgan's "counter interior" that counters the room in which it finds itself. And points to rooms that say make room, "you might crawl your way out of it again."

But the rooms are never empty. Morgan does not make maps without considering how all the careful and violent relationships evolve in and through the grids of those systems. If we can only recognize "the room... uncouple[ed] from the body.

in relief. as building," then the architectonics circle around an abundance of empty affect and no-feeling towards real social life and practice. The building boasts of surviving its inhabitants. The room, in Saretta Morgan's telling, might be the play of talking through the phone, "our shoulders were wet. on the hill, rushing water formed small dunes in the grass." The dampness of grass becomes that of fingers, touch, glow, unrestraint. The moment of "two ravaged hands to light an obscured interior."

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**Marilyn Buck's *Inside/Out: The Selected Poems of Marilyn Buck* (City Lights, 2012)  
Review by John Rufo**

Marilyn Buck, an affiliated member of the Black Liberation Army, was charged for aiding in the assistance of Assata Shakur's 1979 escape from New Jersey's Clinton Correctional Facility for Women. In his 1997 speech/essay, "Every Nation Struggling to Be Free Has a Right to Struggle, a Duty to Struggle," Geronimo Jaga outlines her situation: "You've heard of Assata Shakur, but you probably never heard about Marilyn Buck...or Dr. Mutulu Shakur, who were convicted for breaking her out of prison. I can't talk enough about Marilyn; she's one of my heroes. She's doing 77 to life in prison right now." More than a decade after Jaga's writing, Buck was released on "medical parole" in 2010, and passed away of cancer less than a month later. In her absence, Buck's poems were collected, and it is our duty to study them. Again, I have no intention towards thoroughness: only a few lines will be sent for here, though many could be chosen.

Buck's poetry, most of which

was written during her decades-long incarceration, serves in the erotic space-wake of Assata Shakur's offerings in her *Assata: An Autobiography*. As Buck writes in the collection *Inside/Out*: "a prisoner kisses / she is defiant ... a crime wave of kisses." Sensual, sexual, and social lives deemed unworthy of collective gathering still steal away life and maintain a right to opacity, as Glissant might put it, despite and in the face of state and federal "disciplining." All behavior – "the way we everyday talk" – by incarcerated persons becomes therefore "aggressive" and "violent" in these quotidian instances. Poetry's everyday communicative abilities drive the illicitness of Buck's rebelliousness within carceral architectures, a place whose anti-ecological dimensions can be traced in two words: "no trees." Buck's imaginative erotic outpouring of spaces in support of earth instead of world complements Shakur's socio-poetic love, and gives credence to the life-force made available within the prison via the ethics of the Black Panthers.

Additionally, what becomes valuable about reading Marilyn Buck alongside Assata Shakur are the ways in which the former calls forward the dimension of time in a similar manner to how I read Shakur's treatment of space. Buck clarifies the minute-by-minute singularized (self-) consciousness imposed by the prison: "Mail call begins: 4:30pm / uncommon precision...my name is called and called." The crushing atmosphere of regimented points in time – where/when "clocks punch / holes in perceptions," where/when "time's up / one hour / we must go / 9:16 A.M." – becomes livable because of Buck's dedication to sociality, her unwillingness to stay alert only for her own name. Through telephone calls, postcards, and dreams, Buck makes visitations and receives guests, both from

# Reviews

ghosts of the past and friends of the present. But, in this dedicative communion, communication technologies are often locked into a battle with allotted minute-by-minute restrictions. The poem "Prison Chant" combines Shakur's dedication to social love with the real material conditions which seek to crush such opportunities, where there's always a lack of time: "...no the phone has cut me off / I need more time," another incarcerated person named Cassandra relates to the speaker. "...please let me call again / I know you're next." These tightly controlled technological restrictions in incarceration facilities still form the basis of current U.S. regimes of isolation.

In a system that currently has begun further curtailing visitation rights and opportunities for persons to speak face-to-face with incarcerated loved ones,

Buck's poetry – which doesn't simply focus on her own individual freedom, but the communities created within carceral spaces and those interfaces – feels especially prescient and presses us to critique those "social" systems which are actually designed to keep people away from one another. Buck guides us into understanding how these relationships are poetic, social, ultimately anti-state and abolitionist. If the prison is designed to keep individuals as discrete and separated from one another, without access to communication or practice of art-making, Buck's example is a key display of how this process can be thoroughly countered, and how our practices to withdraw by drawing together can be sustained.

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## Alice Notley's *Alice Notley: Live in Seattle* (Fonograf Editions, 2017) Review by Jason Merritt

"Nothing is allowed to die in a society of story telling people. It is all, the good and the bad-carted up and brought along from one generation to the next" -Harry Crews

My friend Alice Notley is both oxygen and helium. But she cannot, and will not be confined to any such chart, elementally. She is from the desert, specifically, so getting to hear her read her work in person is a rare bird. In Seattle she blew air into the hearts of us, those she loves, and we who love her, I was there, and I can prove it. Now a recording of that reading is available on a vinyl record, released by the label Fonograf.

Listen. This is important. In this day and age, Alice Notley's voice



TRANSLATED BY MICHAEL STRAUSS  
INTRODUCTORY ESSAY BY HELENE JF DE AGUILAR, Ph.D.  
ARTWORK BY ANNA PIPES

## GRAPES AND THE WIND PABLO NERUDA

TRANSLATED BY MICHAEL STRAUSS  
INTRODUCTORY ESSAY BY  
HELENE JF DE AGUILAR, Ph.D.  
ARTWORK BY ANNA PIPES

376 pages  
ISBN 978-1-54682-98-9 \$18.00

Poems of travel the ultimate Neruda is found within, blown from country to country: "I went singing / wandering..." As if to wander is to sing, and the poetry this poet effected is in sum an ode to life. Michael Strauss' translations of these poems bring to light Neruda's identity as an ego obscured in the symbolism of plants, places, and people.

VINCENT KATZ

**D**espite being one of Neruda's most important works following publication of *Canto General*, *Las Uvas y el Viento* [*Grapes and the Wind*, 1954] has never previously been translated into English. Written in political exile from his Chile because of his membership in the Communist Party, Neruda describes a political and poetic landscape during post-WWII ranging from Isla Negra in Chile to Mao's China.

Thanks to this translation of Neruda's *Las Uvas y el Viento*, we English readers have been given a gift, this long song from a poet who loved our blue planet. This is his ode to its brilliant shimmer, fizzy as it is. In his Whitman-esque way, this is a different exploration than Neruda's renowned love poems, as he takes us to each vineyard, steel mill, or sleeping city, in an almost reckless way.

SOPIE CABOT BLACK



is needed and perfect. 'Pages are permanent, voices are not'. But now that we have her voice on a vinyl record, specifically from April 5th 2017 at around 8pm, it just may outlast the page.

Something changes in people when we put on a piece of vinyl to listen to a recording. It commands all of our attention, especially when it comes time to flip the record. Flipping a record is a moment. Having Alice on vinyl is a national treasure, at least to me, and flipping this record changes my meal patterns, because we just stop and listen.

Although I was skeptical at first about the editorial decision to intersperse her reading of 'Certain Magical Acts' with her post reading Q&A banter, upon listening it made sense, all the sense in the world. Her poetry is conversational and her conversation dances around just as naturally, not to reduce either.

She talks openly about her sub-conscience and her conscience blending lately, which she finds annoying, understandably. But here's the thing: listening to this record we get to hear the hilarious, irreverent kind-wild-mind at work. Listening to this record is what it sounds like to hang out with her, which is something everyone should get the chance to do, and with this record now you can, sort of.

She has written more than we may ever read, and recorded precious few readings on vinyl. So please treasure this. As Alice says on the record, 'There is more, but I'm not going to read it'. If we are lucky, we may get to hear more.

In conversation she says, 'I had to recreate History and prove that I could write it'. It's there, on this record.

Alice is the desert. Alice is the lower east side. Alice is Paris.

Alice is you alive, she promises, she will make you a pallet on your floor. She has elevated me. Sit in front of your record player, and listen deeply to the speaker. And I mean the speaker in both senses. If you are a person alive, you will not be disappointed.

**Jason Merritt** is the songwriter for the band Timesbold, and solo under the moniker 'Whip'. He is also co-songwriter for a new musical collaboration called 'Miracle Whips' and is a (very) occasionally published poet. He lives in Portland Oregon.

# Q&A: Jayson P. Smith

**1. You've created such an incredible reading series, NOMAD, where you're not only introducing poets to new readers but poets to each other! Tell me about your approach to curating. And how do you stay so organized?**

That's really kind of you to say, Marwa—thank you <3

Curating is pretty lit because beyond anything else, I'm a reader /audience member first. NOMAD is honestly an extension of every writer that I carry with me through the world—poets who make me pace & cry & reconsider so much, so often. The series is my way of saying thank you to them, for making it feel less so.

I'm cackling at the thought of organization, because I happen to think my life is a mess most days. Both my north node & my mother are Capricorns, which I'm sure doesn't hurt. That, & lots of productivity apps: one task manager, a focus timer, and an app to schedule emails. I've spent most of my working life as some kind of assistant / administrator, so trying on + refitting work structures is crucial for me.

**2. You were in an Emerge-Surface-Be fellow in 2016, how has that impacted you as a poet and member of the writing community?**

Okay. So I really want to undo this (honestly, trash) fantasy that artists don't need to talk, think about & consider money on a deep level—bc I'm over here like, sis... how? America's a literal capitalist wasteland built on nostalgia, convenience, and comfort—&! black folks have historically been kept out of successful financial models, whether through bureaucratic or actual violence. Where does a yung queen go from there?

Emerge-Surface-Be, through the financial support + mentorship, gave me the space to imagine the beginnings of a sustainable

practice.

Most importantly, I've found an essential friend + reader + resource in John Godfrey over the last year. I had no idea what to expect, & from our first meeting to now, I've grown so much as a writer & a reader. I never thought I'd be a person who could spot a shitty Rimbaud translation—yet here we are. JG is absolutely the best thing to come out of this fellowship, & I'm eternally grateful to the Poetry Project for helping to bring us together.

**3. What is the best thing about being a poet right now? What is the most difficult?**

Best Thing(!) The Internet. When I first started, I remember printing out pages of interviews by my favorite poets—Jericho Brown, Vieve Francis, Dawn Lundy Martin—the joy I felt in being so in-control of my own learning. Social Media is also real cute in that regard: I met one of my best friends, Justin Phillip Reed\*, after we were published in the same issue of *MUZZLE*.

Worst Thing(!) Low key, the internet. Social Media is real un-cute in assigning a kind of immediacy to art + art-making, & that feels antithetical to poetry. The most important piece of advice I've received over the years is that I don't have to write \*a book\* at/by (insert arbitrary period here). I have to write \*my book\*, when & how it decides to manifest.

\*Pre-order *INDECENCY* (Copper Canyon, 2018) y'all. Don't say I didn't tell you.

**4. What has been your favorite reading or moment at the Poetry Project?**

Honestly, my favorite moment was something different until this past New Year's Reading. M. Lamar sang the hour before I did & legitimately shook the room. One of the most haunting two-three minutes of my life; I get chills each time I think about it.

**5. How does your background knowledge in dance inform your poetics?**

Dance taught me the beauty in revision, I think. In the moments where you're really working, you can absolutely witness your body change—in similar way to working within the first, second, third draft.

Beyond that, I'm continually interested in what it means to consider poetry as an embodied practice. Ross Gay says all the time that "poems are bodies". If they are, & we're \*actively\* using our bodies to create them—what does efficiency look like in our generative / revision process? What's extraneous? How do we acknowledge, then push past fatigue? What does it look like to restore ourselves each day, in order to make it back into the studio (or in this case, on the page)? I think I want to understand my poetics (and at large, my artistic practice) not as a discovery, but moreso a reunion: of all the processes I've stumbled upon and let go of, thinking it wasn't the "right way". What's right for my body? For what it knows & remembers, by choice or otherwise?

**6. Where have you found inspiration lately?**

Ashley M. Jones. Charleen McClure. Monica Sok. Hieu Minh Nguyen. Francis Logan. Justin Phillip Reed. Nabila Lovelace. Hanif Abdurraqib. Safia Elhillo. You. Tafisha Edwards. Sean D. Henry-Smith. Jonah Mixon Webster. Ishmael Islam. Nicholas Nichols. Paul Tran. Fatimah Asghar. Xandria Phillips. Luther Hughes. Raven Jackson. Gabriel Ramirez. L. Lamar Wilson. Phillip B. Williams. Angel Nafis. Danez Smith. Jerriod Avant.

SZA's CTRL. Nai Palm's Needle Paw. Robert Mapplethorpe. Solange, live on stage. Janet Jackson, eternally. Lorna Simpson. Deana Lawson. Clarice Lispector. Flannery O'Connor. Amateur Porn. Essie Nail Polish. Mint

# Q&A: Jayson P. Smith

Jasper. People Watching. Pleated Skirts. New Orleans, Louisiana. Considerate Tops.

## 7. A passage from something you've read recently that has resonated:

"I cut off my hair because I wanted to begin again with something on my body no man has touched"  
-Khadijah Queen, *I'm So Fine, A List of Famous Men And What I Had On*

"Aloma lived in this dark place, a dark county in a dark state, and it pressed on her ceaselessly as a girl until she finally realized in a moment of prescience that one day adulthood would come with its great shuddering release and she would be free. Then she would leave and find a rise less place where nothing impeded the progress of the sun from the moment it rose in the east

until it died out easily, dismissed in the west. That was what she wanted. That more than family, that more than friendship, that more than love. Just the kind of day that couldn't be recalled into premature darkness by the land."  
C.E. Morgan, *All The Living*

## 8. What would you say are the top three qualities of an excellent poem?

Rigor, Risk, and Irreverence.

Rigor, because non-excellent poems are when you (a writer) don't try, & I (a reader) can tell. When the poem hasn't really been considered—on a level of line, sound, image, etc.—and it shows. Jericho Brown recently said "I'm still here for the well-wrought line" & I was really in my house yelling "me too!" I'm proud of coming from teachers who firmly believe in craft & what it makes possible, so

that's first.

Risk, because the House of Carl Phillips says so. Also because what's the point of the poem otherwise? I'm always expecting to leave the poem slightly different than when I arrived—how will that happen if there are no stakes?

Irreverence because I think that's just within the tradition anyway—we know poets are often the first to go when the wars start. It's probably not because of the secret militias they've been training. I think the mark of a mature poet is understanding how to continually ask the deeper question, & something about that work—of mining & distilling experience & language into an object meant to move beyond surface (advertising) comprehension—is fucking terrifying to the state. Fear is telling. So scare the girls, y'all. Ask good questions.

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