

october

my father buys dahlias for my home  
he is older than he was last time I saw  
him. his vintage heart strumming away  
his skin soft as tissue. my mother notes,  
the flowers are ten dollars. my dad says  
Kuch nahi hota, its okay. stoops to reach  
for the burst of petals, hands them to me.

m.a.a.

# THE POETRY PROJECT

October/November 2018

Issue #256

# The Poetry Project

## October/November 2018 Issue #256

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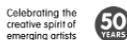
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**Cover image:** courtesy of Maryam A. Ansari

# Free Omnidawn Poetry Readings

**Berl's Poetry Bookshop, 141 Front St., Brooklyn  
Thursday, November 15, 7–10 PM**

Julie Carr   Ewa Chrusciel   Norma Cole   Steve Dickison   Richard Greenfield  
J.D. Moyer   Sara Mumolo   Diana Khoi Nguyen   Bin Ramke   Claire Marie Stancek

All readers at this Berl's reading will also read at the Poets House reading listed below.

**Poets House, 10 River Terrace, Tribeca  
Friday, November 16, 6–9 PM**



Molly  
Bendall



Laynie  
Browne



Julie  
Carr



Ewa  
Chrusciel



Norma  
Cole



Steve  
Dickison



Richard  
Greenfield



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Kim



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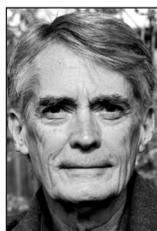
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Mumolo



Diana Khoi  
Nguyen



Douglas  
Piccinnini



Bin  
Ramke



Martha  
Ronk



Andrew  
Seguin



Claire Marie  
Stancek



Cole  
Swensen



Daniel  
Tiffany



Tyrone  
Williams

For additional info visit: [www.omnidawn.com/events](http://www.omnidawn.com/events)



# Letter from the Executive Director

There's a firefly in the church office flashing with its abdomen little neon telegrams which I take to be auspicious. It's the end of my first summer with The Poetry Project as Executive Director. I've spent my mornings and my evenings here, listening to recordings from our archives, reading issues of *The Poetry Project Newsletter*, *The World*, *Telephone*, *Adventures in Poetry*, reading missives and notebook marginalia from past directors, past editors, braced to learn how others have acclimated themselves to a way of life saturated with poetry. And in the afternoons, I've been the very grateful beneficiary of time in the company of friends from our community, who have filled me in candidly on history and changes, an always affectionate supply of gossip, the many ways The Poetry Project has been for them a home.

Meanwhile, the season has spun forward with eclipses and uncertainty. I can hear military airplanes peacocking on the half hour, heralding (I imagine)

some elected perpetrator of violence. It has been a summer of escalating cruelty directed at immigrants, a summer inaugurated by silence in the wake of celebrity suicides, and it has also been a summer racked with much coming to terms around access and identity in the universe of poetry. What can poets and poems do in this time – a question whose permutations I have tracked across all times in our history.

This is also the summer I acquired a bicycle from Ariel Goldberg, who has recently decamped to Tucson. Both the job and the bicycle, I am finding, require that I shut the more distractable channels in my mind off, pay attention to what's around me, and assemble all this into some sort of compass for movement. It's fun, and it is work. I sing to myself while doing it, I have faith in the going.

kd

## Announcements

We are pleased to welcome back our curators for the Fall: **Adjua Gargi Nzinga Greaves** for the Monday series; and **Mirene Arsanios and Rachel Valinsky** for the Friday Series. And we are thrilled that **Yaz Lancaster, Ivana Montalvo**, and **Kallie Quist** will again be joining us as interns.

We also would like to extend our deepest condolences to the families and friends of members of our community who passed away this Spring and Summer: **Barbara Barg, Tom Clark, Bill Corbett**, and **Bobbie Louise Hawkins**. We will be dedicating remembrances and events to these writers in the coming year.

# Letter from the Editor

Anotha one.

The a/c was on blast as we began envisioning this issue and now, as we finalize, it's dropped a good twenty degrees and raining outside. Here I am talking about the weather when there's so much more interesting stuff to read.... just grateful it's fall and that we're here.

The latest for you:

1. Welcome our new Executive Director Kyle Dacuyan! And the office firefly :) on page 5.
2. Imani Elizabeth Jackson and Vanessa Jimenez Gabb with poems on pages 7 and 11.
3. Roberto Montes comes through again with those ever-relevant po-biz GRIEVANCES on page 12. Follow him on twitter @RobertoGMontes for more.

4. Maryam Afaq's art is clearly a poet's work; a poet's heart. I hope you clip these pieces and post them somewhere you can see them everyday. Starting on page 14.

5. Reviews on page 22! Featuring Carrie Lorig on Ella Longpre's *How To Keep You Alive*, Timothy Otte on Alexis Pope's *That Which Comes After*, and Rahsaan Mahadeo on Jasmine Gibson and Madison Van Oort's *Time Theft: A Love Story*.

Also shoutout Reviews Editor John Rufo's coining the term "appositional noise," for this gorgeous and insightful Reviews intro.

And finally, an interview with Ammiel Alcalay (page 22) -- which Kyle and I agree, can only be described as FIRE.

Until the next.  
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

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# POETRY: Imani Elizabeth Jackson

When we talk about history and the archive, we are  
defending the dead. I have to imperil myself to write  
these encounters with nothing.

Women often make their bodies vehicles. Women often  
attempt to embody archives or be them. I am to hazard  
this journey, countering the violence of abstraction.

It's the romance of resistance that I refuse to narrate.  
Anti-monument. I'm always bent to the present,  
psychic recollections of a past that is present.

These absences or losses are windows  
that haunt, the landscape itself a witness.  
Lifeworlds hoed in reaped ripped up from the fields.  
There are signs that suggest a haunting.

---

**Imani Elizabeth Jackson** is from and based in Chicago. Some of her writing can be found in or is forthcoming in *Grappa Press Weekly*, *Flag + Void*, and *HOLD: a journal*.

# September - November Master Classes + Workshops

## **The Tender Fierceness of Decolonial Poetics**

1-session Master Class with Raquel Salas Rivera

Saturday, September 15, 2018

2:00 – 5:00pm

Neighborhood Preservation Center (232 E 11th St, New York, NY 10003)

How can poetry be a decolonial practice? This workshop asks participants to engage with a range of decolonial literary and performative practices. We will be looking at work and translations by Leonel Rugama, Angelamaría Dávila, Mickey Negrón, Rubén Darío, Julia de Burgos, Craig Santos Perez, Bad Bunny, Marigloria Palma, and Tego Calderón, among others. We will also look at forms of performance that have taken part in strikes, protests, and social movements.

The workshop will include writing and performative exercises. Students are invited to bring their own work, as well as examples of poets who influence their ideas toward a decolonial poetics.

**Raquel Salas Rivera** is the 2018-19 Poet Laureate of Philadelphia and a CantoMundo Fellow. Their work has appeared in journals such as the *Revista del Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña*, *Apogee*, *McSweeney's*, and the *Boston Review*. They are the author of *Caneca de anhelos turbios* (Editora Educación Emergente), *oropel/tinsel* (Lark Books), *tierra intermitente* (Ediciones Alayubia), and *lo terciario/ the tertiary* (Timeless, Infinite Light). Currently, they are Co-editor of *Puerto Rico en mi corazón*, a collection of bilingual broadsides of contemporary Puerto Rican poets.

\* \* \*

## **The 1981 Feminist Reading Group**

5-session Reading Group with Laura Henriksen

Tuesdays; September 18 – October 16, 2018

7:00 – 9:00pm

Neighborhood Preservation Center (232 E 11th St, New York, NY 10003)

If we take seriously the idea that poets make excellent alternate record-keepers, that part of the work of poetry is to create a subversive archive of unofficial history and shared memory and mood, how then might poetry be uniquely suited to taking us back, to showing us not just the events of a year as laid out by narratives of power, but the inside of a year? Say, for example, the year 1981? In this reading group, instead of organizing our conversation around an individual author, we will focus on a time, and attempt to uncover what 1981 felt like / was like through the close reading of five crucial texts published that year. Resisting nostalgia, and with certain misgivings about the whole "linear time" framework, we will listen for voices that have been silenced and narratives that have been lost or mistold, we will reclaim what was left behind that we still need today, and we will see what we can learn about a different era from the perspective of our era, as well as what we can learn about our era from the perspective of another, all while keeping in mind our own responsibilities as alternate record-keepers, making an "archive of feelings," in 2018.

But wait, why 1981? Join the reading group and find out!

Texts will include Cherríe Moraga and Gloria E. Anzaldúa anthology, *This Bridge Called My Back*, Eileen Myles's *Fresh Young Voice From The Plains*, Diane Burns's *Riding the One-Eyed Ford* (discussion led by the foremost Burns scholar, Nicole Wallace), Alice Notley's *Waltzing Matilda*, and Lorenzo Thomas's *The Bathers* (discussion led by acclaimed book sleuth Dave Morse). PDFs will be provided!

**Laura Henriksen's** writing can be found in *P-Queue*, *The Brooklyn Rail*, *Foundry*, *Jacket2*, *High Noon*, and other places. She is the author of the chapbook *Agata* (Imp, 2017). Her new collaborative chapbook with Beka Goedde, *Fluid Arrangements*, was printed with Planthouse Gallery. She performed in the 2018 New Ear Festival and read in the 92nd St Y's 2018 Tenth Muse event, selected by Eileen Myles. She is currently pursuing a Masters in American Studies and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at the CUNY Graduate Center.

\* \* \*

## **[the] birds dreamed hungry: a poetry workshop on Larry Eigner and Black Mountain Poetry**

10-session Workshop with Jennifer Bartlett

Thursdays; September 20 – December 6, 2018

7:00 – 9:00pm

LGBTQ Center (208 W 13th St, New York, NY 10011)

This workshop will focus on the work and life of Larry Eigner as a map to expand one's own poetry and vision of the world. While he is most often associated with the Black Mountain College poets, Eigner, who had severe cerebral palsy, has also been read as an important influence on disability poetics, as well as eco-poetics and the language poets. His work is formally and syntactically marked by the breath-based patterns described in Charles Olson's "Projective Verse," and his poems also reflect William Carlos Williams' "no idea but in things." As such, the workshop will examine how Eigner's poems fit into these categories and how we, as poets, can use his work as a jumping off point to expand our own. We will be generating new writing throughout the workshop, and our meetings will include critical discussion around readings, as well as their connections to contemporary activist movements.

**Jennifer Bartlett** is the author of four books of poetry and co-editor of *Beauty is a Verb: The New Poetry of Disability*. She has been researching and writing a biography on Larry Eigner for the past seven years.

# September - November Master Classes + Workshops

## Abolitionist Poetics and the Practice of Dreaming

1-session Master Class with Jackie Wang

Saturday, October 27, 2018

2:00 - 5:00pm

Location TBA

*In Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination*, Robin D. G. Kelley writes: "Poetry...is not what we simply recognize as the formal 'poem,' but a revolt: a scream in the night, an emancipation of language and old ways of thinking." In this workshop, we will explore the relationship between poetry and social imagination. We will use dreams to access a mode of thinking that does not concede to the realism of the present, that seeks to shatter the captivity of bodies and imaginations. The workshop will consist of writing exercises (feel free to bring your dreams!) and discussions of texts and film clips shared by the instructor.

**Jackie Wang** is a student of the dream state, black studies scholar, prison abolitionist, poet, filmmaker, performer, trauma monster, and PhD candidate at Harvard University in African and African American Studies. She is the author of *Carceral Capitalism* (Semiotexte / MIT Press), a number of punk zines including *On Being Hard Femme*, and a collection of dream poems titled *Tiny Spelunker of the Oneiro-Womb* (Capricious). In her most recent work she has been researching the bail bonds industry and the history of risk assessment in criminal justice. Find her @LoneberryWang and Loneberry.tumblr.com.

\* \* \*

## Poet Against Empire: a Generative Erasure Workshop

5-session Workshop with Candace Williams

Tuesdays; October 23 – November 27, 2018

7:00 – 9:00pm

Neighborhood Preservation Center (232 E 11th St, New York, NY 10003)

How can erasure poetry be a means for confrontation and dialogue? What makes a good erasure poem? How can a poet use feedback to revise a visual poem? Whether someone is new to poetry, or is an experienced writer, erasing found text can help poets generate visually-engaging work that responds to power with precision and complexity. In this workshop, participants will analyze different strategies used in erasure poems, try out these strategies by drafting 2-3 erasures of their own, and give and receive feedback on work crafted during the workshop. Readings include poems by Chase Berggrun, jay dodd, Philip Metres, Isobel O'Hare, M. NourbeSe Philip, and Srikanth Reddy.

**Candace Williams** is a black queer nerd living a double life. By day, she's a sixth grade humanities educator and robotics coach. By night and subway ride, she's a poet. *futureblack*, her first full-length manuscript, is a finalist of the 2018 National Poetry Series open competition. In 2018, she released *Spells for Black Wizards* (The Atlas Review), a winner of the 2017 TAR Chapbook Series. Her work has appeared in the *PEN Poetry Series*, *Tin House Online*, *Hyperallergic*, and *Nepantla: An Anthology for Queer Poets of Color* (Nightboat Books), among other places. She earned her master's in education from Stanford University and has received support from Cave Canem, Brooklyn Poets, and the Fine Arts Work Center. Her essays, interviews, and reviews can be found in *Electric Literature*, *VIDA Review*, *the Fanzine*, and *Shondaland*.

\* \* \*

## None of Your Business

1-session Master Class with Simone White

Saturday, November 3, 2018

2:00 – 5:00pm

Neighborhood Preservation Center (232 E 11th St, New York, NY 10003)

I am concerned with excavating the whole space of emotional life, which is social life. *Nothing in Nature is Private*: I believe it. And that the poem's work can be accounting for the constitution of emotional life by force; the emotional life as an effect of being crushed into the shape a self contingent, fresh, wet. Vitality — my life — must stake my poem's placement and worth, else it become an aesthetic confessing booth, an emptiness to the side of the acts we claim to account for in and around us. Is it possible to get in front of feeling to feel what power is making in the moment? No slant to it. The risks are (literally) spectacular.

This master class will explore the "personal" or "private" statement as an element of a poetry that is asking, *What are my boundaries?* What passed through me and left me intact? What if I say what happened when "I" was traversed? Fresh hell? Jubilee? Plus, what is the function of figurative language in this thinking and writing? Looking at examples from Harriet Jacobs to Robert Lowell to Khadijah Queen, we'll consider the poetics of revelation in the work of everyone around the table.

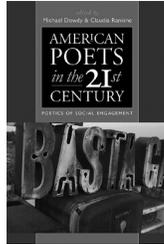
**Simone White** is the author of *Dear Angel of Death*, *Of Being Dispersed*, *House Envy of All of the World* and the chapbooks *Unrest* and *Dolly* (with the paintings of Kim Thomas). She teaches in the English department at the University of Pennsylvania and lives in Brooklyn with her son.

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 2018-19 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 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).

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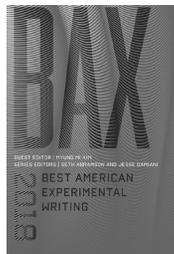
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# POETRY: Vanessa Jimenez Gabb

## from BASIC NEEDS

I will inherit money once.

Sometime next summer I am told. My father will be old enough and will pay the taxes on his teaching and it will be one sum and enough to buy a little land. *Only for land. It is not for anything else.*

My life will be not quite the same. *I was thinking of you. I'm moving to Hawaii for music. To write. Forever grateful for you.*  
Men

I have known are changing their lives. Coming to life as a frontier.  
To see the beginnings.

\*

The obligatory conversation I have with myself. I am on a bluff wanting to get beyond. I am not in New Orleans where the ladies are celebrating their marriages. It will be confusing. Not having is the most explicable thing. Sound experiments. I am trying not to feel meaningless.

\*

I climb into his lap and we look for each other a while without  
Anything within the range of normal listening. Then I say the word  
Yes.

And he says the word *Good*. I think about how I got here. To a  
frame I don't know. How could I until I reach it.

---

**Vanessa Jimenez Gabb** is the author of *Images for Radical Politics*, the Editor's Pick in the 2015 Rescue Press Black Box Poetry Contest. Her work has appeared in *PEN Poetry Series*, *The Brooklyn Rail*, *jubilat*, *Sixth Finch* and *VIDA: Women in Literary Arts*. She teaches at Newark Academy in Livingston, NJ and is from and lives in Brooklyn, NY.

# GRIEVANCES

compiled from the social media of Roberto Montes

The truth is every day	In the opinion of the poet Who above all in the realized world demands a relief	A half-hearted audience
Marginalized people are pressured		There is an economy of sentiment that has grown
To surrender the imagination	Of violence against marginalized people	Around capitalizing on this trick
Of being	Often worth the sacrifices	Infiltrating the discourse of popular culture and the academy alike
For political expediency	But sacrifices are made	One of the first things a marginalized poet learns
In the case of queerness for example	And they must be recognized	Is how to do the trick
It is more persuasive to insist	For they will always be accounted for	It is not necessarily something spoken of out-right
"We did not and would not choose to be"	By those who wish not only to deface our bodies	And I am not so cynical as to believe that there exist
Than to argue the ramifications of such a choice	But annihilate the possibility of our return	Individuals who purposefully and comprehensively plan such a mechanization
Or unravel the difficult beauty	Let us speak of identity	Like most things
Of its possibility	In the opinion of the poet	It comes about through the invisible hand
A bald and effective measure	Who above all in poetry demands a relief	Of the institutional feedback loop
For precipitating inclusion	From the bounds of imagination imposed upon us by those who know better	Work that seeks to translate marginalized experience
Is to reorient the conversation surrounding power	We package each other	For the benefit of the straight, white center is praised
So that those at the center of it	To sell ourselves	Awarded
Come to understand	It feels now that a marginalized poet cannot	And declared representative of a people
That a violence against your people	Write outside of translation	Work that doesn't is left to mill at room temperature
Is by its nature a violence against themselves	Of their marginalization	Where exceptions arise
(The congressman at the podium:	(In some instances not	I have seen marginalized poets wielded as if bludgeons
"As the father of two beautiful daughters..."	Because they are forbidden	In a froth of anger by those at the center
"As the cousin of a proud gay man...")	But because they lack the capacity)	An example An excuse
Though this may limit what you are able to become	The age of identity has arrived	
The benefits of political inclusion	And with it the reaffirmation of poetry as sociological construct	
Are obvious and	Distinguished plaques to instruct and ensure	

# GRIEVANCES

compiled from the social media of Roberto Montes

Anything to protect their standing from  
what they

In the absence of imagination

Understand only as an incursion on their  
turf

I recall one such moment when I spoke  
to A Poet

Noting how outrageous I felt

It was that their words be so twisted

By a Poet of the Center to legitimize  
what

Seemed to me to be a cowardly  
argument against the merit of another  
poet of color

In a transparent effort to delegitimize  
work that did not seek to translate

But instead to embody the very refusal  
of translation

And the confusion I felt as they  
responded in a moderated tone

That I was perhaps reading too deeply  
into things

A week later when it was announced that  
the Poet of the Center

Was publishing The Poet I spoke to in a  
prestigious journal

Embracing diversity by featuring voices  
from the outside

I felt a great and subtle shame

Not of The Poet I spoke to

But of myself

That I almost ruined the opportunity of  
another

By putting them on the spot

(Hope also carries with it a chilling effect)

It is not necessarily inclusion

That is at fault

But the mechanisms that determine  
inclusion

Will always be subject

To the institutional feedback loop

The internet and social media have

Rather than contest this process

Optimized it beyond reproach

The discourse that is available to us

The critiques we are able to make

Necessarily surrenders the boundaries of  
what's possible

We don't want our friends to struggle

But we cannot afford to cede the  
symbology of struggle

We don't want to sentimentalize our  
experience

But we can't risk the loss of the string  
quartet

The work that we are to publish

Has been partitioned in advance

When the voice you have is not your  
own

Sometimes I wonder

If silence is the answer

(The only thing beyond imagination)

But where there is possibility

There is choice

And the truth is

Every day we choose

Queerness

Just as every day you choose

The world you carry in you

It is these choices that

In the face of the flat palm of political  
expediency

Give us our strength

Not what we choose to be

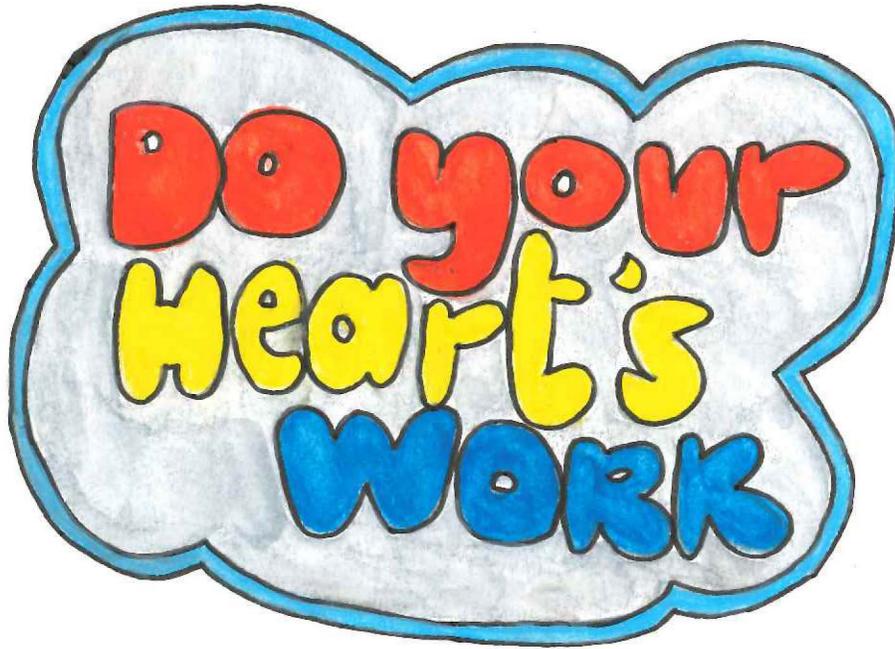
But that a choice was made

Impossible to translate

Impossible to take

—  
**Roberto Montes** is the author of  
*GRIEVANCES* (The Atlas Review)

# ART: Maryam A. Ansari



## **About the work:**

As someone who moved around all my life, home is nebulous but I'm always seeking it and arriving most certainly when I make something. My work is created from an impulse to make invisible things visible, whether it be a fleeting look or the fault lines of power. These days I'm most inspired by houseplants of all kinds, pushing buds out to the surface while their roots grow furiously in the dark soil. I see my art similarly, as the flora that appears from the hard inner work of settling more and more into myself, my gaze, my roots and my hearing.

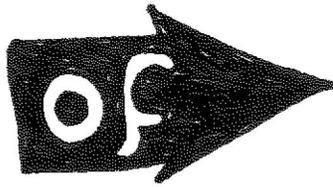
## **About MARYAM A. ANSARI:**

Maryam A. Ansari is a writer and artist living in with her two daughters and husband. She received her graduate degree from New York University and has called Islamabad, Kuala Lumpur, Brooklyn and San Jose her home. You can find her musings and artwork at [www.instagram.com/maryam.a.ansari](http://www.instagram.com/maryam.a.ansari)

YOUR FURY

holds

LIFETIMES



WISDOM

let it breathe

&

LISTEN

- TRACEE ELLIS ROSS -

# ART: Maryam A. Ansari



my great grandmother  
Umt unnisa gave birth to 7  
children and died at  
age 29. I had my  
first daughter almost  
at 29 years  
100 later. Rest in  
power dear one



Knowing our history  
makes us both  
bruised & beautiful

- Beyonce



# Goosebumps of Antimatter

→|←

Richard Martin

## GOOSEBUMPS OF ANTIMATTER Richard Martin

ISBN 978-1-947980-04-4 pbk. 592 pages \$50.00  
ISBN 978-1-947980-46-4 hdc. \$60.00

**EDWARD DORN WAS TASKED** by his teacher Olson's obsession with his teacher Pound's Cantos to write a poem containing history, which he subverted by humor ("Entrapment is this society's sole activity—& only laughter can blow it to rags.") ... "Television is the olive in the martini of chain reaction," a line Dorn would have traded on. By comparison, the emergent distraction of funny cowboy poems is merely another noisy fight down the bar. Martin's brand of humor, like the late master's, is determinedly social. Only the clinically mad tell jokes to themselves, and even then Artaud kept on writing for the stage. ... Dick Martin is paradoxically one of our unblinking social critics—and part of the power of his book derives from his relentless re-estimations of his fate as a plastic card-carrying member of the popular culture it has taken a century for late capitalism to manifest.

RICH BLEVINS

Richard Martin's *Marks* does a remarkable thing: it makes metaphysical absurdities sound as conversational as a good joke. What looks like a surrealist writing his will and sounds like an irrepressible stand-up comedian is actually, fresh, green, recognizably original poetry. GUY DAVENPORT

I had great fun reading Richard Martin's stories. They're so relentlessly perverse, so acridly playful. They're driven by a remorselessly exact self-consciousness that refuses to accept the limits of its own powers of expression, a kind of anti-textuality that keeps pulling the rug out from under itself. STEPHEN-PAUL MARTIN

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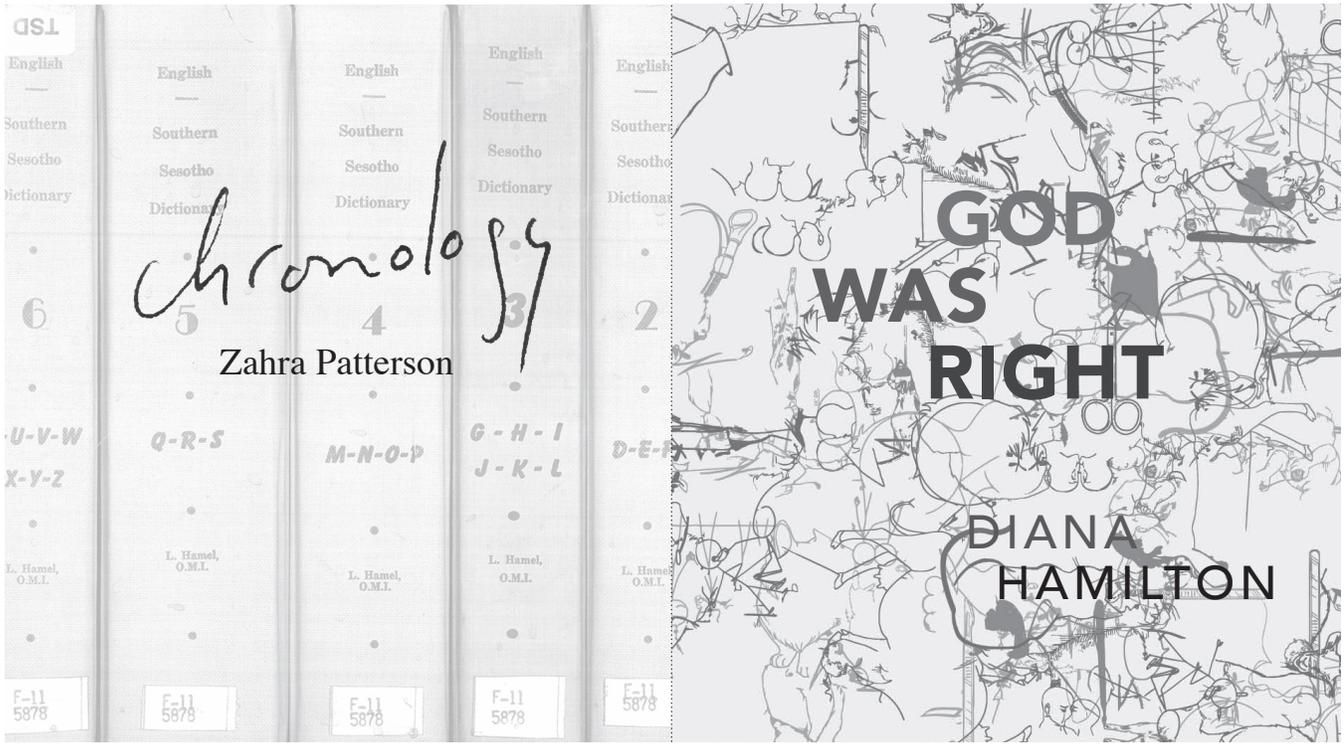
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# Calendar of Events

Yo-Yo Labs. She is currently finishing her first novel, *Homing*.

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.

## WED 9/19

### **Pamela Sneed's Sweet Dreams Book Party**

Join us for a celebration of **Pamela Sneed's Sweet Dreams** (Belladonna\* 2018), a hybrid work of poetry, essay, and memoir that confronts issues of in/visibility; relationships, community, and inclusion/exclusion; writing and transformation--through anecdotes from Sneed's own life, interwoven with analyses of pop culture, and buoyed by the wisdom of mentors such as Sekou Sundiata and Audre Lorde. Pamela will be joined by special guest readers **Shelley Marlow, Roya Marsh, and Tracie Morris**.

## FRI 9/21

### **Nuar Alsadir & Sarah Wang**

**Nuar Alsadir** is a poet, essayist and psychoanalyst. She is the author of the poetry collections *Fourth Person Singular* and *More Shadow Than Bird*. Her poems and essays have appeared in numerous publications, including *Granta*, *The New York Times Magazine*, *BOMB*, *Slate*, *Grand Street*, *The Kenyon Review*, *Ploughshares*, *Poetry London* and *The Poetry Review*.

**Sarah Wang** has written for *BOMB*, *n+1*, *The Los Angeles Review of Books*, *Joyland*, *Catapult*, *Conjunctions*, *Stonecutter Journal*, *Story Magazine*, *The Third Rail*, *Ugly Duckling Presse*, *Semiotext(e)'s Animal Shelter*, *Tiny Crimes: Very Short Tales of Mystery and Murder*, *Black Clock*, *Musée d'Art Contemporain de Lyon*, and *The Last Newspaper at the New Museum*, among other publications.

## MON 9/24

### **Daniel Poppick & Dannielle Schoonebeek**

**Daniel Poppick's** writing appears in *BOMB*, *The New Republic*, *The PEN Poetry Series*, *Granta*, *Fanzine*, *Bennington Review*, and on *Poetry Now*. He is the author of *The Police* and the chapbook *Vox Squad*.

**Dannielle Schoonebeek** is the author of *American Barricade* and *Trébuchet*. A recipient of a 2015 Ruth Lilly and Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg Poetry Fellowship from Poetry Foundation, recent work appears in *Poetry*, *The New Yorker*, *American Poetry Review*, and elsewhere.

## WED 9/26

### **Book Release for if wants to be the same as is: The Essential David Bromige**

A selection of the 22 books published during **David Bromige's** lifetime, *IF WANTS TO BE THE SAME AS IS* charts the course of one of the 21st century poetry masters from high modernism through L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E to his own distinct place. It includes the unpublished work *American Testament*, as well as *My Poetry*, his important work combining poetry and poetics, in its entirety, as well as critical essays by editors Bob Perelman and Ron Silliman, and Canadian writer George Bowering. The NYC release will feature readings from **Bruce Andrews, Steve Benson, Charles Bernstein, Lee Ann Brown, Nada Gordon, Erica Hunt, Jack Krick, Stan Mir, A.L. Nielsen, Bob Perelman, Nick Piombino, James Sherry, and Ron Silliman**.

## WED 10/3

### **Khadijah Queen & Divya Victor**

**Khadijah Queen** is the author of five books, most recently *I'm So Fine: A List of Famous Men & What I Had On*. Her verse play *Non-Sequitur*, won the Leslie Scalapino Award for Innovative Women's Performance Writing. She is an Assistant Professor of creative writing at University of Colorado, Boulder.

**Divya Victor** is the author of *KITH*, *NATURAL SUBJECTS*, *UNSUB*, and *THINGS TO DO WITH YOUR MOUTH*. Her chapbooks include *Semblance* and *Hellocasts* by Charles Reznikoff by Divya Victor by Vanessa Place. Victor is Assistant Professor of Poetry and Writing at Michigan State University and Guest Editor at *Jacket2*.

## FRI 10/5

### **Caitlin Berrigan & Marianne Shaneen**

**Caitlin Berrigan** works across performance, video, sculpture, text and public choreographies to engage with the intimate and embodied dimensions of power, politics, and capitalism. She has created special commissions for the Whitney Museum of American Art, Harvard Carpenter Center, and the deCordova Museum.

**Marianne Shaneen** is a Lebanese/Mexican-American writer of fiction, poetry, and essays, who also works in documentary video. Her work has appeared in *BOMB*, *The Brooklyn Rail*, *Manchester University Press*, *Vanitas*, and elsewhere. Her chapbook *Lucent Amnesia* was published by Portable Press/

## MON 10/8

### **WHO DO YOU LIVE? Of Place Names and Perpetuity**

Drawing on the work of place name historians, indigenous peoples, and scholars of North American history and imperialism, through this event The Poetry Project will begin a long-term, multi-dimensional exploration of the very ground it stands on, and the broader potential for the politics and poetics of place names. Without knowledge of the lives whose names we call out, what spirits are summoned by way of our passive ignorance? And when we are informed, what shall become of them? Participants TBA.

## WED 10/10

### **Book Release for Wake Me When It's Over: Selected Poems of Bill Kushner**

Street scenes, past and future lovers, and imaginary animals show up in the poems of **Bill Kushner**. Join us for the release of the *Selected Poems* by this beloved poet and friend of many, edited by **Peter Bushyeager**. Organized by **Lewis Warsh**, the reading will feature **Anselm Berrigan, Edmund Berrigan, Peter Bushyeager, Charlotte Carter, Lydia Cortes, Kenny "Angel" Davis, Maggie Dubris, Edward Foster, Guy Gauthier, Barbara Henning, Patricia Spears Jones, Betty LaRoe, Robin Messing, Dennis Moritz, Elinor Nauen, KB Nemcosky, Tom Savage, Noam Scheindlin, Stephen Spiceland, Lewis Warsh, Phyllis Wat, and Don Yorty**.

## WED 10/17

### **Forrest Gander & Rosamond S. King**

**Forrest Gander's** most recent books are the novel *The Trace*, the poems *Eiko & Koma*, and *Alice Iris Red Horse: Selected Poems of Yoshimasu Gozo*. *Be With*, Gander's first full book of poems since *Core Samples from the World*, a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Critics Circle Award, is just out from New Directions.

**Rosamond S. King** is a creative and critical writer and performer. Poetry publications include the Lambda Award-winning collection *Rock / Salt / Stone* and poems in more than three dozen journals, blogs, and anthologies. Her scholarly book *Island Bodies: Transgressive Sexualities in the Caribbean Imagination* received the Caribbean Studies Association best book award.

## FRI 10/19

### **Captive: Forugh Farrokhzad Book Launch & Talk with Farzaneh Milani**

Join us for the launch of *Asir (Captive)*, a newly published facsimile of Iranian poet and film director **Forugh Farrokhzad's** first collection of poems, originally published

in Iran in 1955. Translator **Farzaneh Milani** will present a talk on the work of Forugh Farrokhzad on this occasion, followed by a conversation with invited guests.

#### MON 10/22

##### **Stephon Lawrence & Phoebe Glick**

**Stephon Lawrence** is a Brooklyn born & based writer, and artist. She is an editor of *The Felt*, a journal of otherworldly poetics. Her work has appeared in *Cosmonauts Avenue*, *Queen Mob's Teahouse*, *GlitterMOB*, *Fanzine* & other places. Her microchap //GERMZ is available from Ghost City Press. Her chapbook //EVIL TWIN is available from Resolving Host.

**Phoebe Glick** is a writer and editor concerned with preserving queer intimacy under the carceral State. She is the co-founder and co-editor of *The Felt*. Her creative and critical work has appeared or is forthcoming in her chapbook *Period Appropriate*, as well as in *Jacket 2*, *No Dear Magazine*, *Apogee Journal*, *Cosmonauts Avenue* and elsewhere.

#### WED 10/24

##### **Readings from *The Collected Poems of Lorenzo Thomas***

In the 1970s Lorenzo Thomas, poet, scholar, and youngest member of the Umbra workshop, wrote the lines, "We did them a fortune. We did / Them a favor just being / Ourselves inside of Them" (*The Bathers*, 1981), exploring through his poetry what he also examined as a scholar -- the history of black art, culture, and activism, the works and worlds black artists made possible, the vibrant meaning they created or unveiled. Please join us in a celebration of his life and work, in advance of the publication of *The Collected Poems of Lorenzo Thomas*, with readings by **A.L. Nielsen, Ras Moshe Burnett, Lydia Cortes, Patricia Spears Jones, Charles Bernstein, Erica Hunt, William J. Harris, and Tracie Morris.**

#### WED 10/31

##### **Harpy Land**

What happens when the terrifying and the divine, camp and the macabre, poets and costumes all converge? A Poetry Project Halloween party. We will follow Helen Adam into Harpy Land, where wolf eyes gleam, Heaven and Hell go hand-in-hand, and everyone gets the grue. Join us for a night of rituals, readings, performances, and looks with **Chase Berggrun, Joey de Jesus, Deepali Gupta, Raja Feather Kelly, Edgar Oliver, Alexandra Tatarsky**, and others to be announced.

#### FRI 11/2

##### **Open Reading**

Open readings have always been an integral part of The Poetry Project's programming. They provide a time and space for writers of all levels of experience to test, fine tune, and work out their writing and reading styles in front of a supportive audience. Sign-in at 7:45pm.

#### MON 11/5

##### **Stella Corso & Denise Jarrott**

**Stella Corso** is a writer and performer currently living in Brooklyn. She is a founding member of the Connecticut River Valley Poets' Theater and graduate of the MFA Program for Poets & Writers at UMass-Amherst. Her first book of poems, *TANTRUM*, was selected by Douglas Kearney as winner of the 2016 Black Box Prize for Poetry from Rescue Press.

**Denise Jarrott** is the author of *NYMPH* and a chapbook, *Nine Elegies*. She grew up in Iowa and lives in Brooklyn.

#### WED 11/7

##### **Book Release for *Since When, a Memoir* by Bill Berkson**

*Since When* takes us through a life of friendship, admiration, and long conversation between poets, visual artists, critics, performers, and activists, with the incomparably bighearted and worldly poet **Bill Berkson** at its center. Join us as we celebrate the release of Berkson's memoir with readings and reflections from **Connie Lewallen, Ron Padgett, Holland Cotter, Kyle Schlesinger, Anne Waldman, Phong Bui**, and others to be announced.

#### WED 11/14

##### **Trickster Feminism with Anne Waldman & Friends**

This event will highlight **Anne Waldman's** new book *Trickster Feminism*, Penguin, 2018. With musicians, vocalists: **Fast Speaking Music (Devin Brahja Waldman and Ambrose Bye)**. With special guests: **Melanie Dyer, Janice Lowe, Thurston Moore** and the premiere of a short video "Crepuscular" by **No Land**, 2018.

#### FRI 11/16

##### **Brandon Shimoda & Anna Della Subin**

**Brandon Shimoda's** recent books are *The Desert*, *Dept. of Posthumous Letters* (drawings; text by Dot Devota and Caitie Moore), and *The Grave on the Wall*. He is currently researching/writing a book on the afterlife of Japanese American incarceration, passages from which have appeared in/on *The Asian American Literary Review*, *Densho Blog*, *Hyperallergic*, *The Margins*, and *The New Inquiry*. He lives in the desert.

**Anna Della Subin** is a writer, critic, and independent scholar. She is the author of *Not Dead But Sleeping* and is a contributing editor at *Bidoun*, a publishing and curatorial initiative focused on the Middle East and its diasporas. Her book *Accidental Gods*, on men inadvertently turned into deities, is forthcoming from Metropolitan/Henry Holt.

#### MON 11/26

##### **Vi Khi Nao & Alicia Jo Rabins**

**Vi Khi Nao** is the author of *Sheep Machine* and *Umbilical Hospital*; of the short story collection, *A Brief Alphabet of Torture*; the novel, *Fish in Exile*; and the poetry collection, *The Old Philosopher*. Her work includes poetry, fiction, film and cross-genre collaboration. Her stories, poems, and drawings.

**Alicia Jo Rabins** is a poet, composer, performer and Torah teacher. She is the author of *Divinity School* and *Fruit Geode*. Rabins is the creator and performer of *Girls in Trouble*, an indie-folk song cycle about women in Torah, and *A Kaddish for Bernie Madoff*, a one-woman chamber-rock opera about finance and mysticism currently being made into a film.

#### WED 11/28

##### **Drew Gardner & Evelyn Reilly**

**Drew Gardner's** poetry books include *Sugar Pill*, *Petroleum Hat*, *Chomp Away*, and, most recently, *Defender*. His anthology of unruly 20th century poetry is forthcoming from University of New Mexico Press. His work has appeared in *Poetry*, *The Nation*, and *Postmodern American Poetry: A Norton Anthology*. Gardner lives in New York City.

**Evelyn Reilly** is the author of *Styrofoam*, *Apocalypso*, and *Echolocation*, as well as *Hiatus* and *Fervent Remnants of Reflective Surfaces*. Her poetry and essays have appeared in many journals and anthologies. She lives in New York City and works as a writer for natural history and cultural museums.

#### FRI 11/30

##### **Correspondences: Readings with Etel**

Correspondences: Readings with Etel invites poets and critics **Ammiel Alcalay, Sarah Riggs**, and **Kaelen Wilson-Goldie** to discuss the significance of **Etel Adnan's** multifaceted work on their own practice and thinking. A joint conversation will follow individual readings.

# Reviews

## LETTER FROM REVIEWS EDITOR JOHN RUFO:

The reviews section of *The Poetry Project Newsletter* is back from summer break and persists, even if only as a preface, in endeavoring to serve as a space for writing with writing, never solitary. Here we present three writings with writing: Carrie Lorig on Ella Longpre's *How To Keep You Alive*, Timothy Otte on Alexis Pope's *That Which Comes After*, and Rahsaan Mahadeo on Jasmine Gibson and Madison Van Oort's *Time Theft: A Love Story*.

I say writing **with** to indicate that, for some time, we've been trying to set aside some time where we can be together and alongside, even if we're quiet as a low hum and/or with appositional noise. Huddled, we hunker down and get to work with one another against Work, whether in the humidity and heat or the paradoxical dryness of snowy broken circumscriptions. We write because we read and vice versa in our versed vices.

Poetry can be one such recording, an instrument and its echo, that beckons us toward unknowing what we thought we thought. I mean to say that it can loosen and listen. In its shaking, we may be taken up to a closer consideration and living-with if we choose to attend. Just because we're late doesn't mean we didn't arrive.

Some final selected variations from our contributors as another introduction. Carrie Lorig says, in her writing: "the book fucked me up." Devoting our lives to this mess is our mass, our last time being lost in the crowd. Timothy Otte says that the reader may slow down and linger. Loitering with the pages, to permit a precision by wandering. Rahsaan Mahadeo says to bear an enduring love for insurgent workers everywhere. How might this love for and with insurgent workers look and sound? How has it already been sounded? Trust you to be around for that, for us. We will. Out on the porch as the August sun puts itself out. Epistle to everybody, whoever wants to meet. Repeating that there's always another already existing alternative to and before the evil in plain sight.

We want to know! We welcome writing or inquiries via email: [reviews.ppnl@poetryproject.org](mailto:reviews.ppnl@poetryproject.org)

– John Rufo

\*\*\*

## Ella Longpre, *How To Keep You Alive*, Civil Coping Mechanisms (CCM), 2017 Review by Carrie Lorig

1. The book I am carrying around in my unbroken hand on Valentine's Day states a question without the mark. I read near a tree before work and write in the margins of a page, "Very in love w questions that refuse the mark bc the mark is already so present and uttered elsewhere and otherwise. Somehow the Atacama blooms / without permission / with all its bone and life." *How To Keep You Alive* no question mark becomes terror that fills our bodies this particular Valentine's Day.

2.

What are you failing to say. If you are speaking to someone is one of you still (already) gone / or is there a delay.

What rituals are useful to locating who's gone.

3. Did I read near the tree before work or did I read at work, carefully hiding *How To Keep You Alive* just below the beige rim of my desk. Did I write in the margins on the page or did I write over an image of the page for an Instagram story that is since, gone. I underline a sentence. "To be wild but appear ordered."

4. My partner and I attend an event called "The Rebel: In Celebration of Mari Evans." The scholars speaking about her answer questions by reading her poems, by talking about how the rooms and notes in her house were arranged, by speaking about her work, her clothes, her dessert. A student asks what it means to face a person in the archive, how to protect the complexity of who that person is, what they felt, what they created. Dr. Althea Tait tells her, I will not produce knowledge, a talking product, about this woman. I go to the archive and open myself to revelation. Go and wait for revelation. That's why you're in the archive. Be present with or in proximity to someone's life in a way you did not feel was possible.

Escape: beyond performance. A ritual. Meekly approach the edge and stop. Hover, waiting for a sign, to be called forward by the unknown that's poised in the silhouette of your potential. You are caught on the edge, unable to fathom the silhouette, humbled.

# Reviews

4. Longpre's book insists you meet it in a revelation of the unknown, the fragment, a painful overlap of memory and an inability or a refusal to recreate memory linearly. "A book is what a ghost is / trying to say. Does she become the house or does she become / the fire. You don't need much to keep a story."

*How To Keep You Alive* reminds me a great deal of another book I recently wrote about, Jane Lewty's *In One Form To Find Another*. Both books endlessly fold into / unfurl around / flinch against the time, the bodies, the space, and the details of the event / the traumatic event. What does it mean to be in proximity to someone's life according to incredible terms they create?

"You could recreate a book of photographs. A line of questioning you don't anticipate emerges:

*how far from memory have you come?"*

These books and their writing do not emerge as narrative defined by clarity, itemized invoices, and a "satisfying" slab of healed flesh. Rather, here, memory, emotion, presence, and body are defined by an unstoppable whirling. A whirling that is as necessary as it is disorienting. An intensity, a fading in and out which chunkily collapses rigid assumptions of reality and "reflecting upon" reality. Who gets the privilege to "reflect upon" reality? When is the expectation that one should "reflect upon" harmful to those who want to acknowledge an event in ways which exceed prescribed trajectories or imagining? Rather, here, we have reality or the unknown, the fragment, hundreds of fragments / hundreds of unknowns, a painful overlap of memories or realities or bodies or buildings or objects, which all exist severally and refuse to exist severally.

5. The more I type the word "overlap," the more I feel it is a verb particularly and actively embedded in Longpre's text. It is the book's floral abundance. In *How To Keep You Alive*, pronouns fall in and out of capitalization, they blend into each other and interchange while also still indicating separate bodies, separate experience. Objects, similarly, pulse in and out and overtop each other. Fire / house / tree / water. The pulse is or can be painful, a rubbing / a robbing of. However, it's also a sign of movement. An experience of reality and of memory. An act of confusion and the enactment of a question. The body of a family. The body of their poverty. The body of lost records. The body of lost bodies. What remains. What body is that.

I have to work very hard to keep my eyes open now that I have passed to the other side of

ruin. A name in a book. White flowers on the table. How to keep ruin from completely growing over you, I have been replaced by ruin, is this even my body I am in. Whose house is this, whose face in the window. If home is tenderness than I once unstrapped a small body from a stretcher and held him to me so that we breathed together until he stopped shaking. I was his apparatus. A lost boy, a small child, they came to find me, hesitant to take responsibility for his body, a lost boy, this was one of the last times I saw him, if you never see them again, they don't age, I have trouble remembering if this is the time the light went out of his eyes. We could not speak in the house. I worship the space where I can still speak...

6. I think often about what is sanctioned as inspiring / quote-worthy and how much extraction or isolation is a part of that classification. I think often about how extraction from the text or isolation of the poem is the most common signal for conveying reading. It isn't violent, but it is violent / when it becomes something like proof of value. Books like Longpre's should not be pitted against books or writing that happen to be quotable. However, books like Longpre's importantly acknowledge how many varied ways of reading, writing, and thinking exist. What if a thought / a feeling through takes more than one book / takes several books to course through. What if such variance can't be perfectly distilled or shouldn't be.

But remembering the small bodies I reverse the trajectory.

How can I create a reaction to *How to Keep You Alive* except to insist that it should be experienced. Nothing I've quoted should prompt a potential reader more or less than the simple fact that the book fucked me up / that it lives as a fold in an ocean I'll spend something like my life sorting through the texture of.

Ruin: does not erase  
but superimposes  
something  
you can't see.

7. Such notions of unquotability are particularly radical when discussing how a body continues to feel through an unnamed event or trauma. How is this a form of protection, movement, and survival.

Empathy means you understand how the world moves,  
and how it could move against them,  
and you don't want to be the world.

# Reviews

8. How is this complexity, unwrapped from linear detail, meant for no one / meant for everything. What if unquotability is less about unquotability and more of signal that a thought / a writing continues to be enroute. Is this an "incompleteness" or is it something more interesting. The promise of the writing, the books, and the overlap to come.

Ruin is duration.

Ruin is not a visual characteristic. Ruin is duration. Ruin fills a space while opening it.

A room over time. Who am I.

9. Such notions of unquotability create time that has been withheld or not given. It creates space for the body writing / the body reading / their wild overlap / a revelation.

What are the responsibilities of your body. How do you forgive your body. What are the responsibilities of a poet. How do you forgive a poet. How do you even find forgiveness to be useful.

How might your skin change. Why don't the Remains repulse you / do you ever let go. What is mine. How do you set aside time for your body to fall apart. What does it mean for a body to fall apart.

10a.

If they can't make impressions they expect they can break you. Like if you are not flux

you are rigid. But they forget you are wild, too, and you can sense the air shift. They cut the lilac bush to the ground but never dig the root so the ground starts to sink and the tiles fall apart. You can sense the air shift and know to move around it like the tree in this room now growing up the wall, that is, it's glowing, a room on fire, if they see your house is dark always they will not be afraid, you open the blinds so the window becomes a screen playing the fire, a mirror you watch it on, on this day, years ago, the man at the door can he see you, too, there is no way you can let him into this room, in an act of forgiveness, he wants to become ruin, in an act of protection you are become ruin, they never expect you to be wild, always something that depresses or snaps, never something that moves.

The refusal to use a question mark in such a book / a book that doesn't detail the event(s) is an immense

refusal to acknowledge any possibility the event(s) didn't occur. The life before the event(s) mattered and the life after it does. That life doesn't owe anyone detail / and rather, would like to offer or fail or succeed at engaging with the event(s) plethora / the ruin / its whirling. All of this life has been changed / not changed by memory. All of this life has been changed by a decision to move through language while refusing linguistic expectations. The body that violated another body or attempts to violate another body flickers on the screen / for a fleeting moment. They are not nothing. But in *How To Keep You Alive*, they are unable to take anything from the ruin / its whirling and instead, briefly witness the ruin / its whirling.

10b. For a long time, I stay near. For a long time, I am quiet / with feeling.

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**Carrie Lorig** is the author of *The Pulp vs. The Throne* (Artifice Books). A chapbook, *The Blood Barn*, will be out from Inside the Castle in early 2019.

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## ***That Which Comes After*, Alexis Pope, Big Lucks Books, 2018 Review by Timothy Otte**

*That Which Comes After*, Alexis Pope's second book, is comprised of snipped off sections of life, creating a collage of what appears on the other side of the Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram feed—the parts of a life that don't get shared, but are very much parts of a complete life. These snipped-off pieces add up to a book length meditation on desire, domesticity, motherhood, and mental health: what does it mean to have a body, to live in a body, give birth to a body? All of these questions are tangled up with the ways women's bodies are politicized; the ways women's actions are seen as implicit threats to the powerful, even the most basic needs and desires.

*That Which Comes After* includes laundry, groceries, and menstruation in columnar, unpunctuated, and widely spaced lines. Sections are untitled, but marked by an opening line in small caps. Pope documents the ways a person tries to build a life around ritual and the ways life resists those rituals, controlling the pace by letting the lines run breathlessly or by tangling the syntax to slow the reader. In the middle of the very first section she writes:

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My day consists of talking myself out  
Of self-loathing wash my underwear in the sink  
Somethings can emphasize my sex  
You walk the room I'm barren  
In the presence of children  
All these plastic containers  
I'm drowning in a life vest

The work grows out of daily living, making a ritual out of the day-to-day in much the same way as *The Bridge* by Mary Austin Speaker and *The Falling Down Dance* by Chris Martin, which share a visual form on the page. Double-spaced lines tumble down the page, often landing with half a page of white space for the reader to linger in. "A ritual is what / I make happen for myself," Pope writes, reminding us that our routines are rituals, whether we grant them anything like ceremony. And sometimes rituals are just the things we keep repeating: "my dollar fifty / Black knit gloves I keep losing."

Throughout, repetition is intentional and well placed, with poems calling back to and referencing one another. About halfway through the book, Pope writes:

Tell me the good kind  
Of work is with hands  
That a life fills the house  
Backyard with a deck  
You built yours  
This is what  
I've made with mine  
Twenty pages later, as the book turns toward its conclusion, she writes:

Decorate a home  
Trace the nostalgia  
Of this forfeiture  
As if I've built  
Anything with these hands  
It's an admittance that life isn't linear and that from day to day an artist may love or hate the work they've made, the work they're making. There is not necessarily a redemption narrative in *That Which Comes After*. When repetition does come, it's complicated:

Could be my voice  
Quiets in these moments  
I'm doing better  
I'm doing better  
Lie to me in the winter  
I'm doing better  
This remarkable passage marks the only time in the

book that lines are repeated unchanged so near to one another.

Pope's syntax is the most impressive aspect of *That Which Comes After*. She lets phrases careen into one another, layering multiple meanings by arranging sentences just so; the omission of punctuation avoids steering the reader toward a single meaning.

Thought about calling  
Thought about not  
Distant grey sky  
What does it look  
Over you  
The blankets we under  
Stand again inside  
By omitting the word "like" after "What does it look," Pope is able to ask, what does it look like? but also asks and answers another question: Distant grey sky: What does it look over? You. The reader supplies multiple ways to punctuate lines throughout, deepening the meaning. While Pope doesn't break words often, the splitting of "under / stand" here is inspired.

Politics are present throughout, an ever-present insistence on the legitimacy of the female body. At the beginning of the book, Pope's focus is on validating the body, whether it is hungry or horny or menstruating or simply existing. "Pick up the laundry at one / Part my folds / Live tweet your orgasm"—laundry and sex and social media all exist on a level here. Men in literature have always been allowed to prattle on about mundane things and call it profound; Pope reclaims that practice, managing to actually be profound by compressing time, fitting a whole life into this book, sometimes even in a handful of lines:

Buying tampons  
Is like buying diapers  
It doesn't end  
Until it does  
My blood petals  
Its beautiful meaning

These lines come at the beginning of the book. As the book progresses, though, Pope gets direct: one section begins, "Men keep telling me how strong I am." The next section asks, "What man has ever listened to the rules." Lines like these throughout the book can be read as sardonic, but they also sound exhausted, especially near the end of the book. These are lines written by a woman who wants to be heard by men who claim to be allies. "I'm not asking you to support me / I'm asking for your support" she writes. Later, exasperation isn't enough and anger

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comes in:

Another girl dies  
And another another one  
Rubs my leg without asking  
My nerves push him closer  
All these allies can't listen  
All these men think they see  
The repeated "another" in the second line above compounds the repeated tragedy, but also blurs into the line that follows—"another [man] / Rubs my leg without asking"—and puts the tragedy in proximity to the harassment, making a link between them: small violences beget larger ones.

The success of *That Which Comes After* is in its dynamic range and sensitivity. Throughout, the book never feels repetitive or tonally redundant. Pope is open to rage, sarcasm, exhaustion, joy, boredom, bewilderment, and the dozens of micro-moments of emotion humans experience every day. "Time passes it takes forever," she writes, risking melodrama and landing in intimacy: "I tell her I'm focusing / On not dying and she says / Keep doing that."

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**Timothy Otte** is a poet and critic living in Minneapolis. He keeps a home on the internet: [www.timothyotte.com](http://www.timothyotte.com).

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## "Time Theft: A Love Story," Jasmine Gibson and Madison Van Oort, *The Elephants*, 2018 Review by Rahsaan Mahadeo

What does it mean to use that which does not belong to you? For Jasmine Gibson and Madison Van Oort, it means that you are likely to be labeled a time thief and that your "time use" will be read as "time theft." In their zine "Time Theft: A Love Story," Gibson and Van Oort offer a glimpse into labor lives of low-wage workers through a collage of Tweets, Facebook posts, and Instagram photos. Each visual reads as a tribute to the worker featured in the post, while also signaling an enduring love for insurgent workers everywhere who transgress time and thus defy the logics of capitalism.

The "love story" begins with, "All Hail the Time Thieves." It is a sort of when Madison met retail work in New York City-story, as well as a when retail met worker resistance in the form of time theft. However, it is important to ask what it means to steal that which is already stolen? As Van Oort notes,

The dilemmas out of which time stealing arise are thus anything but frivolous, forcing us to consider the very material questions of who owns time, and who, in these scenarios, is actually stealing from whom. Under capitalism, time is never our own. Because capitalist lending restrictions make it so that members of the proletariat, many of whom are, to use Nandita Sharma's phrase, "negatively-racialized," must first borrow time before using it, low-wage workers are inured into an unpayable debt. If we consider the fact that time is money and all capitalism is "racial capitalism," it makes sense that the poor and negatively-racialized persons owe, rather than own time.

The second section, #timethefts, is comprised of over 50 pages of the authors' favorite posts from alleged "time thieves." In posting to Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, workers make mundane experiences matter. As one worker tweeted, "I'm back on Twitter. I need something other than Facebook to distract me from the misery of my job all day. #ihatework #timetheft" (47). Through Tweets, Facebook posts, Instagram and art posted to social media, workers resist the temporal strictures of work by not only taking their time, but simultaneously taking their bosses time.

In section 3, Gibson contributes to the love story with three poems, which you will want to read, read, and read again for good measure. Gibson centers the body and in doing so de-centers time and capital. Linking retail to the criminal-legal system and the plantation, Gibson also exposes the psychic tax time imposes on low-wage workers.

The love story then transitions back to more illustrations of time thievery. A memorable meme exemplifying Gibson's "defecation labor practice," is a picture of restroom toilet with the caption: "Pooping at work an average of 10 minutes each day equals 40 hours of paid vacation time every year." Perhaps a shit a day keeps the bosses away and, to quote Peter Tosh, "the shitstem" at bay. It then only seems right for this love story to conclude with an interview with Buzzfeed's Guy Debord, inventor of #HITBRAW (hiding in the bathroom at work). Can bosses really expect workers not to spend an inordinate amount of time on the toilet when they feed them hefty portions of shit every day?

Bosses warn workers, either tacitly or explicitly, not to bite the hand that feeds them. But when the hand that feeds them is feeding them shit, workers have no other choice but to bite and fight back!

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**Rahsaan Mahadeo** is a PhD candidate in the Department of Sociology at the University of Minnesota. He is currently completing his dissertation titled, "Transgressive Temporalities: How Racialized Youth in Urbanized Space Make Sense of Time." In it, he looks at how time is racialized, how race is temporalized and how race, racialization and racism condition youth's perspectives on time.

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## Guidelines for sending work

*The Poetry Project Newsletter* welcomes any writing concerning poetry. It's a little odd for us to frame the following as "guidelines," considering that, strictly speaking, we don't really believe in hard-and-fast rules, grids, keeping things neat, vertical organizing, etc. However, we've found that many people have reached out with questions regarding what we might like to see and publish. Of course, the "best" way to approach this problem might be to read past newsletters, but, as is the way of the world, sometimes it's good to step back and attempt to describe the unruly forest. Here are some things we think and feel about (none of which are mutually exclusive, and even putting them as separate points seems like a fiction):

- Writing as collaboration: letter-writing, emails, annotation, anything. Are you reading a book of poetry with a friend, a partner, a group? Slip into the combination of everyone's back-and-forth babble. We love the noisiness of reading together, if we can be so nosy.
- Writing as archive: do you have access to materials that aren't publicly available? Would you like to share them in conjunction with books about or of poetry? We're interested in contexts, especially those dubbed "historical," in taking up new shapes of how the texts function and malfunction, riot and riff. Also, our notion of "archive" doesn't simply mean institutional or "official": what about emails friends have written? What about zines that go uncollected? Things in closets, boxes, on mantels. Polaroids, scraps of notes.
- Writing about poetry-adjacent topics: writing about readings, performances, art shows, films, etc. – as long as some poetics angle is achieved. Or, surprise us, show the "poetry" where one might not ordinarily sense it. While we shy away, a little, from the big box office types, we want to be proven wrong, all the time, everywhere.

- Writing as "political" action: this is a call against the call of the government(s). The polemic can and should sing too. We love the love of planning how to become simultaneously, even when we have to part.
- Word lengths? Whatever. Usually we publish work between 500-1000 words, but don't hesitate to send something longer and messier. We don't go for publishing, say, dissertations, though drop a line. Please don't hesitate to ask questions or query.

We're thankful that so many print and online venues exist to host what continually proves to be a wide and ecstatic array of writing, and we would like to combine our efforts. That being said, anything which we "turn down" may very well turn into another opportunity for a different place to publish your writing. Typically, we try to send suggestions on other places to forward your writing in the event that we've already published work on a book of poetry. So, if possible, check out our online archive to see in advance what we have attempted to cover in the past. That being said (again), if you have a different approach to a similar work, please send it along. We're open!

As always, our mailbox: [reviews.ppnl@poetryproject.org](mailto:reviews.ppnl@poetryproject.org)

# Q&A: Ammiel Alcalay

## 1. Did you always want to be a poet?

I'm not even sure how to answer that since I think the terms of "being a poet" have changed pretty dramatically over the course of my lifetime. We tend to think of these titles or categories as some kind of timeless essence but "being a poet" has and can mean a lot of different things in different situations. There are times when it has meant being the propaganda mouthpiece of a ruling fiefdom or glorifying an imperial empire. "Poets" have instigated genocidal wars and they've also been witness to those same situations. For me, I think it was "writing" rather than the category of poet particularly, and I came to understand that poetry—under certain very specific historical conditions—can be a unique and very useful form of knowledge, a take on the world that might be unavailable elsewhere, but that seems more and more rare. I was an avid reader and happened to grow up in an environment in and around Boston where I had access to all kinds of people who happened to be poets. My high school years were 1969 to 1973 and so I didn't really go to school much. There were local deaths of people that seemed heroic to me: Jack Kerouac in 1969, Charles Olson and then Steve Jonas in early 1970. I understood that the way they lived—and died—was intimately connected to what they wrote and how the society we were living in considered them, or didn't. I think my relation to poets had more to do with a specific form of attention that might have been more generally prevalent then but was expressed very directly in conversation, in being together. It's recognizable to me immediately, when it still happens. I got to know John Wieners, for instance, as a teenager, and I'd walk around town with him, sometimes talking, sometimes not saying much. That was the case with many others, sometimes with a group of adults going through various very significant things but who never saw me as a bother or an intruder. In retrospect, that's quite remarkable. My first writing "mentor" was the poet Vincent Ferrini, to whom the Maximus poems began as letters. Vincent was exuberant and generous: he operated a frame shop in Gloucester, a very small place that he also lived in, and which has now, happily, become the Gloucester Writers Center, a far cry from the usual "artist retreats." I've written extensively about Vincent and his experience in radical politics in the 1930s and 40s. To have that kind of historical transmission and sense of attention, that to me, I think, is what "being a poet" can mean.

## 2. What has surprised you most about your dedication to this path?

I guess I would say that what I have found surprising in the past few years is how little actually writing or producing poetry has to do with "being a poet." There is no "coin of the realm" in this country anymore. Of course, this is something Ezra Pound

put at the center of his work: "Usura slayeth the child in the womb," which puts it as strongly and as succinctly as possible. We've lived in a kind of banking hell joined at the hip with the British Empire since the creation of the Federal Reserve in 1913. With manufacturing and production now almost fully outsourced, we have also, in so many ways, internally outsourced our own culture, begun thinking of it and relating to it in terms that actually have little or no relationship to the historical conditions in which it was produced. There has been a tradition of poets in the 20th c. with a historical awareness of these conditions but I think the nature of systemic "incorporation," in which the publicity and propaganda machines have usurped almost all available space, has made it that much harder for poets to operate on that critical plane. I'm not sure if this, in itself, is surprising, but I think what I said earlier is. In other words, a deeper understanding that doing the work of poetry might not necessarily mean writing it.

## 3. What has been inspiring you lately?

I'm inspired by a young poet in Gaza, Mosab Abu Toha, who opened an English language reading library called the Edward Said Public Library, under conditions that I would hope we are all aware of. He would very much like to come to the US and study but, of course, he can't leave Gaza, nor has he ever been able to leave Gaza. I'm inspired by Dareen Tatour, a young Palestinian poet who has been under house arrest for several years for a poem she posted on the internet and for which she has just been sentenced to an Israeli prison. I'm inspired by Ahed Tamimi, a 17 year old Palestinian who was just released from prison, along with her mother Nariman, after serving eight months for slapping an Israeli soldier trespassing on her family's land.

## 4. What is the best thing about being a poet right now? What is the most difficult?

On the difficult side, I guess I try to wear blinders because if I paid attention to certain things it would be damaging to both my mental and physical health. And I'm not talking about the circus that refers to itself as "Washington" but the careerist triumphalism that seems to permeate too much of the so-called "poetry world" these days. And I don't mean to paint with such a broad brush because I also feel very rooted in parts of this world, and close to many people participating in it, including myself! There is a tremendous pressure towards conformity, a fear of being critical, of actually expressing difference of thought and opinion, and of engaging in real debate. Of course this characterizes US society as a whole but the trickle down into the poetry scene is, to say the least, disconcerting and very stultifying, sometimes suffocating.

On the better side, again, taking all my previous

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qualifiers about “being a poet” into account, I would say that, having reached a certain age, I realize that I’ve accrued quite varied experiences and the knowledge of those experiences and I’ve been able to become more focused and selective in how I choose to transmit or make use of them. I’ve been having some fun over the past several years with my co-conspirators at Dispatches from the Poetry Wars, one of the few collective efforts out there trying to shake things up a little. My sense is that a lot of people actually follow it, using the equivalent of a brown paper screen-saver so the neighbors don’t find out, as we’re probably considered very impolite, irascible, and politically incorrect. Satire is needed now more than ever and the poems that have been given me over the past several years, a sequence I’m calling *Imperial Abhorrences (& Other Abominations)*, are mainly written while driving (I have a long commute), and are kind of bumper sticker like historical and political treatises, in homage to Ed Dorn.

**5. *Lost & Found: The CUNY Poetics Documents Initiative* is such a wonderful title because the publications carry that energetic charge of discovering a treasure -- if you could tell us how it came to be and why?**

Thank you! Needless to say, I’m very proud of what we’ve been able to achieve, and the fact that we’ve lasted this long and really built a multi-pronged institution within an institution that has also gone out and resonated variously in ways I’m sure I’m not fully aware of. Most of the great mentors I’ve been lucky enough to have always grumbled about this or that great work that, of course, is “out-of-print.” Having that as a kind of baseline, I also came to feel very strongly that the real work of the poets of the 1950s, 60s, and 70s that I am closest to has only begrudgingly begun to be recognized for what it is, and that is a concerted and deep intervention at the heart of how US cultural politics and the state organized itself in the Cold War. This might be more obvious in the case of some figures but less so in the case of others. I saw that students were accustomed to understanding geographical and formal distribution of poets through reading anthologies, thinking that poets divided into schools were like some kind of fish that wouldn’t dare traverse “enemy” waters, and I wanted to find ways of making the culture and politics of the period cohere more to its reality. Finally, my academic training is more as a Medievalist and in Middle East Studies so that when I began teaching graduate students who were primarily involved in contemporary US culture, I realized that they needed more tools to understand the nature of historical contexts and I thought encountering an archive could provide a much more unmediated experience, in which a student would have to confront materials not surrounded by jargon or accepted vocabularies, and be forced to consider

the object in itself and in relation to other actual things and events.

In addition, written in right at the very beginning, was the idea of using this great still public university, CUNY, as a means of bringing this archival work—often so secretive and unknown—into public light. At the heart of this was the idea of the Living Archive, and of hosting older, non-academically affiliated figures who could come into the academy but also bring students out of the academy and into their communities. This is part of a broader approach to providing tools for the preservation of various legacies that are sometimes well-protected but sometimes just a moment’s throw from a dumpster. We tend to think of our institutions as stable but, inherently, they’re not. No one in Baghdad or Sarajevo expected some of the first hits to be against their archives, and it is essential that we understand how important the transmission of historical memory is. This is the heart of the project: putting students in situations in which they take it upon themselves to become the bearers of this transmission.

**6. A passage from something you've read recently that has resonated:**

I’m just now rereading David Ray Griffin’s masterpiece, *The New Pearl Harbor: Disturbing Questions about the Bush Administration and 9/11*. I find myself drawn to the kinds of work that gets labeled as “conspiracy theory” but which I find to actually be the most solid and lucid philosophical and epistemological response to the unreality and cognitive dissonance created by propaganda. Such books actually propagate reality: in discussing Flight 77, the Boeing 757 that allegedly hit the Pentagon, Griffin writes:

“According to at least one version of the official story, authorities were able to identify victims of the crash by their fingerprints. To provide support for the official account, therefore, the fire would have to be hot enough to vaporize aluminum and steel and cool enough to leave human flesh intact.”

This does the work of poetry: I’ve written a short “Imperial Abhorrence” in reference to this called “NEW HORIZONS IN PHYSICS.” By exposing ourselves to the surround sound of propaganda that is everywhere with us, we are actually being forced to “take leave of our senses.”

**7. What do you think of the term “decolonization” and how we all seem to be throwing it around casually these days?**

Useful but very problematic. We’ve barely begun to scratch the surface on this one and need to deeply educate and immerse ourselves in histories and peoples that have undergone the twin processes

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of colonization and decolonization, the second part, of course, being a hell of a lot harder to find true examples of. I've been a long-time student of Indigenous peoples of the Americas, of Palestine, and of Algeria, three very key areas. On the ground, the work of decolonization, as Fanon so eloquently puts it, is, by definition, violent. But that violence is often misunderstood—it can be through armed revolt but it also must be through a Rimbaud like “deregulation of the senses.” The old order must be completely overturned, internally and externally. This is not a simple process, by any means and, being in the USA, the impulse is to simplify things to the point of incoherence or consumer convenience. Thus, on an academic level, for instance, we have the category of the post-colonial, which tends to skip over the difficult work of decolonization. While I mention this as an academic category, given that the academy is often pimping more arcane ideas that soon get repackaged to find popular outlets in the stunningly narrow bandwidth of mass media, this idea suffuses all kinds of discourse. So there are lots of theories bandied about but very few examples that demonstrate the actual work of decolonization. Just to give a recent and very particular example: a former student of mine, Kai Krienke, just translated an extraordinary work by the late Algerian poet and scholar Hamid Nacer-Khodja, which is an almost book length essay prefacing a translation, also done by Kai, of the correspondence between Algerian revolutionary poet Jean Sénac and Nobel Prize winning author Albert Camus, also Algerian, and of similar poor, working-class background. This is a text through which one can learn a hell of a lot more about the actual mechanics of decolonization than shelves of theory. Moreover, we are ourselves colonized to vastly differing degrees by economic structures, racial categories, ideologies, and all manner of propaganda. The splintering of all this into identity politics only is also the work of a kind of colonization and makes deeper resistance incoherent and ineffective. I could go on...

## 8. What is the key to a superb translation?

Not mystifying the process. My friend Elias Khoury always says: “if a masterpiece can't lose twenty-five percent in translation, it probably isn't a masterpiece.” I remain hooked, for example, on the old Constance Garnett translations of Dostoevsky, because those are the ones I read when I swallowed Dostoevsky whole. Now I know that there are supposedly “better” translations out there, but I remain indifferent to them because they feel unfamiliar. I would also say that knowing both the language one is translating from and the language one is translating into, though that might just seem like common sense, is essential! We've come to the point where people are doing all kinds of translations with little or no knowledge of the language translated

from. There are, of course, some people with a certain genius for “language” who can perform miracles, but those are very “informed” miracles. We've also come to a point where the “translation” is set off like some sort of crown jewel, as if anything can actually be conveyed without deeper context. So many of the translation projects that get done in the US just re-inscribe a kind of generic totalitarianism, upholding the values of “the poem” or “the novel.” We need translations with deep context, with historical overviews, with interviews, with excerpts from letters, biographies, polemics, and literary, cultural, and political background. Too few of these get done though I think, hopefully, that is changing.

## 9. What has been your favorite reading or moment at the Poetry Project?

There are so many so I'll have to mention a few. In the mid-1970s, my very dear and old friend Kate Tarlow Morgan and I managed a bookstore in the West Village, a few doors down from a laundromat that I also managed part-time. One day we arrived to open the bookshop and there was a man in a blue suit sitting on a chair outside the shop. It was Robert Duncan. He spent some hours in the shop and, of course, we talked at length. He advised that we try and buy a Gestetner so we could start a small press. We had been planning to go hear him read at the Project that evening, which we did, and it was thrilling. Kate who, among other things, is a dancer and choreographer, created a performance piece called “Blue Suit” that we performed in Gloucester in 2010 at the Charles Olson Centenary celebration, so that encounter had much further resonance, thirty-five years later.

The Project has always been a welcoming place to me, an alternative to the “church” I don't go to. As the machinery ratcheted up towards “Shock and Awe,” the war in Iraq, Anne Waldman and I organized a number of day long events at the project called “Poetry Is News.” There were many great moments, in the spirit of teach-ins of the 60s. Our first speakers included a friend, Rebecca Murray, who had been involved with the International Solidarity Movement (of which Rachel Corrie had been a part), and she described riding with ambulances through the Occupied Territories in Palestine. She was followed by the great Lebanese novelist Elias Khoury who gave a rousing talk that was seized upon when I was later attacked by neo-cons for “bringing Arabs” to places like the Poetry Project! Then, picking the perfect dramatic moment, as usual, Tariq Ali showed up in the middle of the day, to a packed hall, and we just gave him the stage. Finally, a wonderful Naropa student whose name now escapes me brought a group of high school students from Bushwick to talk about the cognitive dissonance they were facing by Army recruiters, and their strategies to organize and

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resist it. That was a brilliant and great moment.

In 2005, along with Fred Dewey and Michael Kelleher, we organized an event called "OlsonNow." I bring it up because I feel like it was a watershed moment and an opportunity not further "exploited." The key to that event was to disturb the standard structures of stage and speakers or panels on subjects. We did UN-style three-quarter circular seating and put microphones all over the place so people could speak from where they were and encounter each other rather than face a stage and look at a speaker. There was no one really leading the discussion and it was run more like a town meeting, interrupted by performances. Some of the ensuing encounters were amazing, like a dialogue between Jack Hirschman and Susan Howe that I don't think could have occurred in a more conventional setting.

Finally, on the down side, I will say that I was somewhat dismayed and almost shocked at the small audience that turned up for Amiri Baraka's memorial, and how so many of the readers qualified their feelings or thoughts about Amiri before their readings. This, to me, was an indication of a certain kind of malaise that I feel has permeated the so-called "poetry world," in which each person is almost

conditioned to feel that they have to stand apart, declare a kind of position of superiority to some purported "bad politics" attributed to the person or subject at hand. I find this colossally smug, historically unconscious, often quite offensive, and usually just a real bore...

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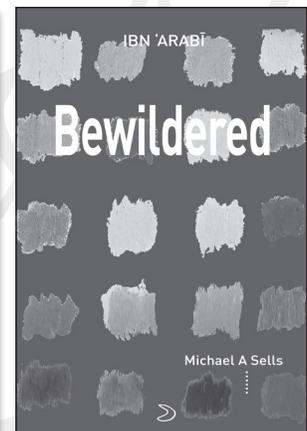
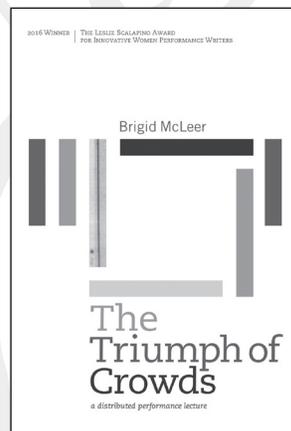
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### SUSTAINING MEMBERSHIP [\$150]

All of the Supporting Membership benefits, plus:

- FREE admission to all regularly scheduled Poetry Project events for you + a guest
- Free Poetry Project tote bag

### DONOR MEMBERSHIP [\$275]

All of the Sustaining Membership benefits, plus:

- Free admission to designated special events, including the annual New Year's Day Marathon Reading
- Set of three Kenward Elmslie LPs

- Deck of limited edition playing cards with the Poetry Project logo
- Grateful public acknowledgment

### BENEFACTOR MEMBERSHIP [\$500]

All of the Donor Membership benefits, plus:

- Choice of signed 1/1 Artist's Proof print of William S. Burroughs by photographer Kate Simon (choose from 6 unique prints).
- Grateful public acknowledgment

### PATRON MEMBERSHIP [\$1000]

All of the Donor Member benefits, plus:

- Signed print, "Joan La Barbara / Tapesongs at Downtown Sound NYC November 1977" by photographer Hank O'Neal.
- Grateful public acknowledgment

NEW AND RECENTLY RENEWED MEMBERS: Alice Tatton-Brown, Monica Claire Antonie, David Brody, Jacob Burckhardt, Christy Wise, Dell Lemmon, Edi Friedlander, Kacey Stamats, Rodney Koenek, Richard Lefkowitz, Meredith Starkman, Tiff Miller, Mark Pawlak, Peter Wilson, Charles and Deborah Piccinnini, Kit Robinson, Phyllis Rosenzweig, Mary Ann Ryan, James Sherry and Deborah Thomas, Stefano Morello, Stephen Benson, David Taylor, Tom Cole, and Diane Wakoski (as of 8/31/18)