



THE POETRY PROJECT

OCTOBER / NOVEMBER 2016 ISSUE #248

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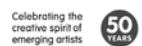
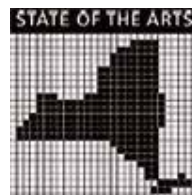
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Cover image: "Laundry," 8" x 8" watercolor on paper, 2016
© Katharine Betty (KB) Jones. Courtesy of the artist.

Letter from the Director

Welcome to the golden anniversary of The Poetry Project! The official Project came into existence 50 years ago, fueled by the need of a group of visionary poets, the good Reverend Michael Allen who welcomed them, and an improbable HEW grant with funds earmarked for a reading series, workshops, a journal, and three salaried positions (Joel Oppenheimer, Joel Sloman, and Anne Waldman). The Project had a mission to serve as an incubator and a home for poets and their audiences via these programs, which turned out to be enduring forms for community engagement.

Change in NYC is just as hyper-paced as anything else. The Project has shown a strong ability to maintain and protect what works, and change what doesn't. Among the many things that continue

to work is having the organization staffed by working poets (also improbable!). It is my honor to be one among many poets I admire who have contributed to the continuance of this space; and it is my privilege to work with my current team, not one of whom is ever happy to rest on the magnificent laurels of our history, but are fully revelatory in lineage. While our whole season is celebratory of this landmark year, we have a platform of special anniversary events called "GIANT NIGHT: The Poetry Project at 50". You can find out all about the Fall GIANT NIGHT events on page 7. We'd be thrilled for you to join us as we start our celebration as multi-directional beings; looking backward, forward, all ways, all at once.

—Stacy Szymaszek



"Couch," 10" x 12" watercolor on paper, 2015, © Katharine Betty (KB) Jones

Notes from the Project

We're thrilled to announce that The Poetry Project's Board of Directors has welcomed two new trustees: Boo Froebel and Purvi Shah!

Boo Froebel, independent curator and producer, consults for the DeVos Institute of Arts Management in Bloomberg Philanthropies's AIM/Arts and Innovation Management program. Prior to DeVos, Froebel served as Producer of Lincoln Center Festival; Executive Producer of the Imagine Festival of Arts, Issues & Ideas (OBIE Award); Curator and Producer of live art at The Whitney Museum; Artistic Director of Galapagos Art Space (OBIE Award); and Creator/Curator/Producer of Phat Tuesdays (an acclaimed monthly performance series that has since evolved into CATCH). A performance generalist, Froebel is a longstanding member of the Bessie Selection Committee, served as lead program consultant for the Creative Capital Foundation; is an auditor for the New York State Council on the Arts' Theater Program; nominator for the CalArts Alpert Award in the Arts, and the Foundation for Contemporary Arts among others. A Minnesota native, Froebel graduated from Sarah Lawrence College.

Known for her sparkly eyeshadow and raucous laughter, **Purvi Shah** inspires change as a social justice advocate and writer. She is curious about language as dreamwork for love, transformation, and justice. She won the inaugural SONY South Asian Social Service Excellence Award for her leadership fighting violence against women. During the 10th anniversary of 9/11, she directed *Together We Are New York*, a community-based poetry project to highlight Asian American voices and experiences. In *Terrain Tracks* (New Rivers Press, 2006), she plumbs migrations and belongings. Her new chaplet, *Dark Lip of the Beloved: Sound Your Fiery God-Praise* (Belladonna*, 2015), explores women's devotions, status, and being. You can discover her work @PurviPoets or <http://purvipoets.net>.

Also in Board news, **Camille Rankine** was elected Chair of the Board! Camille Rankine's first book of poetry, *Incorrect Merciful Impulses*, was published by Copper Canyon Press. She is the author of the chapbook *Slow Dance with Trip Wire*, selected by Cornelius Eady for the Poetry Society of America's 2010 New York Chapbook Fellowship, and a recipient of a 2010 Discovery/Boston Review Poetry Prize. Her poetry has appeared in *Atlas Review*, *American Poet*, *The Baffler*, *Boston Review*, *Denver Quarterly*, *Gulf Coast*, *A Public Space*, *Tin House*, and elsewhere. She serves on the Executive Committee of VIDA: Women in Literary Arts, teaches at Columbia University, and lives in New York City.

Fall Workshops + Master Class + Reading Group

DERACINATION: ENGLISH(ES): AND THE PRACTICE OF POETRY

Master Class with Myung Mi Kim

1 Session | Thursday, 10/27 2-5PM

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

Here are some of the nodes/considerations/questions that undergird the work we will be doing together during this class:

- deracination
- ecological deracination
- the greater [global] reach of English is prompting the greater production of “other Englishes.”
- an intricately indelible system of competence, correctness, and mastery underwrite the conception and practice of language permeating us at any given moment (e.g., orthoepy, orthology, orthography).
- as thinkers, makers, and readers of poetry, how do we problematize this conjoined (exquisite) burden of compliance (in the sense of assent) and attend to the emancipatory potential of language, of poetry to cue plural fluencies/accents/prosodies, to avidly listen for the uncategorizable and the uncoded, and to register alterities, multiplicities, and irreducible difference.

In advance of the class, I will ask participants to send the following: first, readings (I use the word loosely) that they feel will augment the conversation around the rubrics I’ve mentioned above (from any discipline/discourse/genre/medium they see fit; these can be essays, excerpts from a longer piece, fragments, images, even a single stanza.) Second, I invite participants to send in their own creative work to be discussed during the class, however covertly, adjacently, implicitly, improbably, they hover around the considerations I’ve posed.

During the class itself, we’ll begin by discussing the “readings.” The second part of the class will be devoted to linguistic/formal/prosodic writing experiments. We will close by discussing the creative work submitted by participants as they help elucidate and re-constellate the concerns of the workshop.

Myung Mi Kim’s books include *Penury* (Omnidawn), *Commons* (University of California Press), *DURA* (Sun & Moon and Nightboat Books), *The Bounty* (Chax Press), and *Under Flag* (Kelsey Street Press), winner of The Multicultural Publisher’s Exchange Award of Merit. Her fellowships and honors include awards from the Fund for Poetry, the Djerassi Resident Artists Program, Gertrude Stein Awards in Innovative North American Poetry, and the State University of New York Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Scholarship and Creative Activity. Kim is a Professor of English and Director of the Poetics Program at the University at Buffalo.



A POETICS OF NOTICING: POETRY OF/ON/FROM WORK

Workshop with Krystal Languell

5 Sessions | Saturdays, 2-4PM | Begins 10/15

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

“Sorry for the shameless self-promotion!” Together we will consider in/visible and un/compensated work, noting how an infrastructure of free labor undergirds our contemporary poetry community. I will provide activities and writing prompts oriented toward a poetics of noticing: who makes our poetry possible? and then: who makes it visible? We will create poetic documents from errands and emails, but don’t worry we will also clock out and write poems of happy hour and stray moments of solitude too. This workshop will be grounded in the fact that nothing *just happens*. Readings will include work from Susan Briante, Sarah Vap, Carmen Giménez Smith, Ronaldo Wilson, and others.

Krystal Languell was born in South Bend, Indiana. Her most recent book is *Gray Market* (1913 Press, 2016). She published *Archive Theft*, a collection of interviews with women poets, with Essay Press in 2015. She is the recipient of a Poetry Project Emerge-Surface-Be fellowship (2013-2014) and a Lower Manhattan Cultural Council workspace residency (2014-2015). Development Director for Belladonna* Collaborative and publisher of the feminist poetry journal *Bone Bouquet*, Languell also works as a freelance bookkeeper for small presses and teaches at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York.



photo credit: Dan Ogorzalek

LEARNING FROM TRANS POETS

Workshop with Trace Peterson

10 Sessions | Tuesdays, 7-9PM | Begins 10/4

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

Unless you have been living under a rock, you may have noticed that a veritable explosion of literature by trans (genderqueer, nonbinary, transsexual, et al) poets is currently underway. From the recent anthologies *Troubling the Line: Trans and Genderqueer Poetry and Poetics* and *Writing the Walls Down* to new literary journals such as *THEM* and *Vetch*, to the creation of a new Transgender Poetry Award by the Lambda Literary Foundation, trans poetry is here to stay, impossible to avoid, and achieving amazing and innovative things that deserve our attention. Our premise in this workshop will be that *cis and trans people alike can learn from the work of trans poets, so all identities are encouraged to attend, though I will hold space for every student's possible trans-ness*. In this workshop, we will read the work of contemporary poets of various ages and identifications associated with the trans umbrella. We will work together responding to their writing, and we will produce our own poems and trans-genre texts in conversation with theirs, using different prompts, formal constraints, exercises, freewriting, and reader response procedures that we develop individually and together as a class.



Trace Peterson is the author of *Since I Moved In* (Chax Press, 2007), winner of the Gil Ott Award, as well as numerous chapbooks. She is Editor and Publisher of the Lammy Award-winning press/journal EOAGH and coeditor of the anthology *Troubling the Line: Trans and Genderqueer Poetry and Poetics* (Nightboat Books, 2013), which was a Lammy Finalist in 2014. A member of the Board of Directors of VIDA: Women in Literary Arts, Peterson is pursuing a PhD at CUNY Graduate Center and teaches at Hunter College, where she has designed a pioneering course in transgender poetry.

THE POETICS OF PHYSICAL SPACE

Workshop with Brenda Coultas

5 Sessions | Thursdays, 7-9PM | Begins 11/3

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

In this workshop we will study how physical space influences our writing practice and how we may contest or extend the limits of our inner and outer space. We may investigate geologic and historic time, perhaps by gazing at bluestone sidewalks and pondering place names. We may interpret the dreams of the East River or of tenement architecture? Our classes will be supplemented by work from second and third generation New York School, and other outsider traditions. Readings may include Simone White, Marcella Durand, Tonya Foster, Eleni Sikelianos, Stacy Szymaszek, Lorine Niedecker, and others.



photo credit: Bob Gwaltney

Brenda Coultas is the author of *The Tatters*, a collection of poetry, recently published by Wesleyan University Press. Her other books include *The Marvelous Bones of Time* (2008) and *A Handmade Museum* (2003) from Coffee House Press. Her chapbook, *A Journal of Places* can be read at <http://www.metambesen.org/>

GERTRUDE STEIN, PATRIARCHAL POETRY AND MORE

FREE reading group with Evelyn Reilly

5 Sessions | Thursdays, 7-9PM | Begins 11/3

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

In this reading group we will aspire to be "continuously present" for a series of conversations based on *Gertrude Stein: Selections*, edited by Joan Retallack. By engaging with some of Stein's most radical language experiments, we'll explore how they might influence our own writing and thinking about word, world, "ordinary" language and the writing of experience that is also a form of lived experience.

Evelyn Reilly's recent books of poetry include *Styrofoam* and *Apocalypso*, both published by Roof Books. She just completed *Self*, portions of which have appeared in *Pallaksch*. *Pallaksch* and are soon to be included in *Big Energy Poets of the Anthropocene*, edited by Heidi Lynn Staples and Amy King. Her poetry can be found in many journals and anthologies, including *The Arcadia Project: Postmodernism and the Pastoral*; *The &NOW Awards2: The Best Innovative Writing*; *Infiltration: A Hudson Valley Salt Line*; and the forthcoming *Earth Bound: Compass Points for an Ecopoetics*, edited by Jonathan Skinner. Reilly has taught at The Poetry Project and the Summer Writing Program of Naropa University, and has been a curator of the Segue Reading Series.



GIANT NIGHT: THE POETRY PROJECT AT 50

This season marks the 50th Anniversary of The Poetry Project! While we are approaching the entire 2016-17 season as a giant celebration, "Giant Night" is a platform of 7 events that are retrospective, yet encourage us all to future-think our way into new lineages, pedagogies, and ways of seeing.

Winter and Spring platform events are: **December 14: UMBRA: A Living Archive**, **March 1: The Omniscient Tape Recorder, Part 2**, and **March 6: Learning at the Project**. The celebration will culminate with a gala April 27 to honor poet and former Project Artistic Director Anne Waldman, whose first book title *Giant Night* we have borrowed in homage. Look to the next issue of the Newsletter for details, and be sure to tune in to all late-breaking news by signing up for our weekly e-blast on our home page at www.poetryproject.org.

IN . ON . OR ABOUT THE PREMISES: A CELEBRATION OF THE WORK OF PAUL BLACKBURN

PANEL: MON SEPT 26 6:30-8:30PM – AT THE CENTER FOR HUMANITIES Martin E. Segal Theatre 365 5th Ave, New York, NY
Lost & Found: The CUNY Poetics Document Initiative is partnering with us on this panel and discussion. A roundtable discussion moderated by Poetry Project Director **Stacy Szymaszek** will follow short talks by **Marcella Durand**, **George Economou**, **David Henderson**, **Basil King**, **Carolee Schneemann**, **Simon Smith**, and **Robert Vas Dias** on topics such as: his politics, his translations of Provençal troubadour verse and Julio Cortázar, and the role of the poet in shaping the city. This panel will be followed by a reception to celebrate Paul Blackburn, the Project's 50th Anniversary, and the publication of *Lost & Found Series VI* featuring work by Gregory Corso, Judy Grahn, Bobbie Louise Hawkins, and Ted Joans. FREE

READING: WED SEPT 28 8PM – A reading of Blackburn's work at The Poetry Project with **Robert Kelly**, **Kimberly Lyons**, **Ammiel Alcalay**, **Renee Gladman**, **Simone White**, **Martha King**, **Basil King**, **Jerome Rothenberg**, **Marcella Durand**, **Bob Holman**, **David Henderson**, **Rochelle Owens**, **Anne Waldman**, **George Economou**, **Mark Weiss**, **Patricia Spears Jones**, **Brenda Coultas**, **Gregg Weatherby**, **Carlos Blackburn** and **Joan Blackburn**. We will also listen to some tracks from Blackburn's 1966 inaugural Poetry Project reading.

Thought of as the pre-spirit of The Poetry Project, **Paul Blackburn** gave the first reading here on September 22, 1966. His poetry, translations, and organization and recording of early downtown readings, exerted a steady and widespread influence across a wide range of aesthetic practices. In his lifetime Blackburn published thirteen books of original poetry as well as five major works of translation. Twelve other books were published posthumously. *The Collected Poems of Paul Blackburn* (1985) and *The Selected Poems of Paul Blackburn* (1989) are both available from Persea Books, and a reprint of *Proensa: An Anthology of Troubadour Poetry*, is due out from New York Review Books in 2016.

WED NOV 9 8PM – (RE)DEFINING DOWNTOWN

Participants will answer some or none of the following half-questions: What's it mean for The Poetry Project to be The Poetry Project right now, in the East Village, in 2016, which is or was considered "downtown" at points? Is "downtown" a sign, a sigh, a thing, an active nothing, or a something else? Can we have a retrospective season and dissolve nostalgia at the same time? Is there anyone out there listening at all? (If so, peace). Do poets in this town still need real physical centers to go experience the work out front? And what does "need" mean? And what does "real physical centers" mean? And what does "out front" mean? Event will be followed by a mellow reception in lieu of a Q&A. Curated by **Anselm Berrigan** and moderated by **Stacy Szymaszek**. With **Ariel Goldberg**, **Erica Hunt**, **Sophia La Fraga**, **John Yau**, **Steve Zultanski**, **John Godfrey** and more TBA.

FRI NOV 11 8PM – ARTISTS LOVE POETS

In honor of our 50th Anniversary, and as part of our fundraising efforts, the Project teamed up with The Song Cave to print a limited edition portfolio of prints from five artists whose work is important to us: **Jonas Mekas**, **Simone Forti**, **Cecilia Vicuña**, **Mary Manning**, and **Amy Sillman**. All of the images were drawn from the artists' past bodies of work and were made between the 1960s and last year! The portfolio, which will be available for sale, is an edition of 50 c-prints and inkjet prints, and costs \$1,000 for the set or \$250 per print. There will be short performances by the artists as well as a showing of Sillman's "Draft of a Voice-Over for SplitScreen Video Loop" (Poem by Lisa Robertson, drawing/animations by Sillman). The artists who love poets who will be performing this evening are: **Jonas Mekas**, **Cecilia Vicuña**, **Mary Manning** with **Ben Vida**, **Amy Sillman**, **Sreshta Rit Premnath**, **Gordon Hall**, and **Sable Elyse Smith**. Co-presented with The Song Cave. Reception to follow.

MON NOV 28 8PM – THE OMNISCIENT TAPE RECORDER, PART 1

"But Blackburn's omniscient tape recorder was more than a vehicle for retrieval..."
-Michael Davidson, *Ghostlier Demarcations: Modern Poetry and the Material Word*

The Poetry Project's vast collection, currently being processed by the Library of Congress, is a goldmine of potential knowledge and inspiration. Spanning the entirety of the Project's existence, it includes over 4,000 hours of audio, much of it untapped as a scholarly resource. Participants will choose particularly rich poems and discuss their historical impact, the texture and grain of the work's recitation and the impact of these readings, poems, and people on the landscape of American poetry and art. Scholars and writers, including **CA Conrad** on **Eileen Myles** and **Joe Ceravolo**, **Tonya Foster** on **Gwendolyn Brooks**, **Cookie Mueller**, **Pedro Pietri** and **Ntozake Shange**, **Anna Vitale** on **Kathy Acker** and **Hannah Weiner**, will excerpt from and discuss recordings of landmark readings being digitized specially for The Poetry Project's 50th Anniversary by the Library of Congress. The goal of this event is both to showcase The Poetry Project's history and to encourage engagement with the organization's archival collection. Please join us as we call attention to the living community that has sustained the Project for its first 50 years and that remains vital as it moves into its next half century.

In Memoriam: Ted Greenwald (1942-2016)

ADIOS, AMIGO

Ted Greenwald's poetry works its way from line to line, always opening outward. Set lines per stanza and stanzas per page produce formal regularity that stands open to possibility, defined as whatever happens. Whatever happens is mostly word of mouth, street diction hot off the pavement, ways of talking recognizable by ear in a particular urban environment (NYC) where verbalization goes on non-stop. The tone is upbeat, pun-loving, personable, while also take-no-prisoners, wise ass, and/or so what?

I first met Ted in San Francisco in the late 70s. Every time thereafter when in New York, we'd meet at one of his favorite hangouts, the Grand Central Oyster Bar early on, then the Tribeca bistro Capsoudo Freres, for years at Ennio & Michael's restaurant on LaGuardia Place, and finally Mumbles on Third Avenue. Ted had his place at the end of the bar and was always available, a sure bet for good conversation. About what? This, that, and the other thing. No privileged subjects, all fair game.

Books, for instance. WWII was his favored domain, the period he was born into, from Raul Hilberg's *The Destruction of the European Jews* to military histories of the war on the Eastern Front. He turned me on to a number of great mystery writers like Ross Thomas, Donald Westlake, and Lawrence Bloch. Also *The Theory that Would Not Die* by Sharon Bertsch McGrayne, a history of Bayesian logic, and *The Mathematical Theory of Communication* by Shannon and Weaver, a seminal work of information theory. Movies, too. His favorite directors, John Ford, Francis Ford Coppola, Tony Scott and David O. Russell.

Collabs with Ted, always a pleasure. Occasional ones during visits to New York in the 80s. Then, around 2005, we start working by mail, a series of long works, each with a different formal scheme, which ultimately turns into a book, *A Mammal of Style*. Eventually Ted gets on email and the tempo speeds up. We study Japanese linked verse and start batting haiku-like stanzas back and forth. Send one, Ted always comes back pretty much right away, like that backgammon game back in the 80s, or late-night poker at the restaurant I witnessed once, super quick.



photo credit: Charles Bernstein

Talking with Ted at the restaurant about my job naming a product for a tech company, Ted writes on a bar napkin: "Hardon Software."

Nicknames his high school buddies called him: Thaddeus and Chico.

At the outset of his memoir, *Clearview/LIE*, we find Ted in grad school preparing for a teaching career. His first book of poetry, *Lapstrake*, is out, and the next, *Licorice Chronicles*, is underway. He's studying Melville and Pound with an eye to "what makes a great work great." At some point he realizes, "writing and teaching, if you do each right, with any pride in, these are two completely different jobs." In the midst of his dissertation, he stops, decides to go his own way, "in a *follow your own mind way*." The assertion of autonomy is absolutely characteristic. "Me myself, never feel much like living in a subordinate clause." Reminds me of some favorite lines: "I be my own boss / I be my own police" ("The Book I Toss," *Common Sense*) and says a lot about the man, not necessarily easy going, but always all there.

Sports: he liked the Yankees, the NY Giants, the Knicks (up to a point). MLB & NFL playoffs we'd place dollar bets and text each other while watching from opposite coasts.

A night-owl with bad habits, still Ted was a devoted family man. I heard often of Joan and Abby, not to mention Elmore the cat. Their closeness sustained him.

Ted had various different jobs, but there is no doubt what his real job was: poetry, 100 percent. Yet his work was not literary but literally all about being a person, one among many. There is a democratic strain throughout, reflected in the titles he borrowed from Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*, *The Age of Reasons*, and *Own Church*, and in his sense of being, regular, without pretense, naturally social, mentally independent ("fuck-you brain cells").

I learned something every time I talked with Ted. Speaking of Ted, I hate to use the past tense, whose verbs are only in the present.

Kit Robinson is the author of *Marine Layer* (BlazeVOX), *Determination* (Cuneiform), *The Messianic Trees: Selected Poems, 1976-2003* (Adventures in Poetry), and 20 other books of poetry. His collaborations with Ted Greenwald include *A Mammal of Style* (Roof) and *Takeaway* (c_L Books).

TED

A day or two into my first visit to New York City in October 1994, I mustered the courage to call Ted:

"Is this Ted Greenwald?"

"Yeah."

"My name is Miles Champion, and I'm a young poet visiting from England."

"Uh-huh."

"I love your work."

"Uh-huh."

"Er... I'm a friend of Tom Raworth's."

"Oh, you're a friend of *Tom's*! Why didn't you say so? Come on over!"

And that was the start of our friendship. I asked Ted for work for *Tongue to Boot*, and he gave me a chunk of *In Your Dreams* for the first issue and, after that, big dollops— from various sequences— for subsequent issues. I was impressed with how seriously he regarded my little magazine.

Back in NYC again, a few years later, I was walking through Washington Square Park with a vaguely fluorescent smoothie in my hand when I ran into Ted, who had just finished work. "Ditch that and we'll go get a real drink." We sat outside Ennio & Michael's on LaGuardia Place. Paul Violi walked by and Ted invited him to join us, going on to praise Paul's book-length poem *Harmatan*, quoting its opening and closing lines from memory and giving them props as excellent ways to start and finish a book.

By 1999 the routine was that I would simply call Ennio & Michael's when I arrived at JFK.

"Is Ted there?"

"Just a minute."

"This is Ted."

"Ted, it's Miles, I just got in."

"Well, what are you doing over there? Get over here!"

High times on barstools. I suffered the occasional nosebleed in Ted's company, and his advice was always the same: "Smoke a cigarette— nicotine's a poultice." It always worked.

Ted was a tough guy, or at least that's how he presented himself to the world, but in truth he had the sweetest of natures and, when it came to art, a very refined eye (he worked for Holly Solomon and Kazuhito Yoshii, and ran his own Ted Greenwald Gallery). He used to say that downtown NYC was interesting in the early seventies because the art brain was in the hands of the dancers and sculptors. He knew that poets who might not be "great" in the largely boring conventional sense could nevertheless be touched by greatness (Jim Brodey, for one). Another idea was that poets would do well to read Ted Williams's *My Turn at Bat*: at least the poet is spared the particular tragedy of the athlete, namely, that by the time you know how it's done, your body has given out. Wordsworth's mistake— those forty-five years spent polishing *The Prelude*— was instructive, and moving right along was



the operative mode. His unwillingness to be patted on the head by his immediate elders is brilliantly expressed in his poem to Ted Berrigan, "For Ted, on Election Day." He was fond of the hand gesture— a brisk up-down rub of the palms— that meant, I'm out of here, we're done. On Vermont: "There are too many fucking trees." On Buddhism: "Zen's OK, but you've gotta keep it in the city."

Soon after moving to NYC in 2002, I started helping Ted prepare manuscripts: *The Up and Up*, *Clearview/LIE*, *Comma Fork/ Moving Parts*, and, with Kyle Schlesinger, *In Your Dreams* and 3. I'd been combing bookstores, libraries, and the internet for stray poems of Ted's since the mid-nineties, and by 2010 was close to having tracked down all of Ted's uncollected work from the years 1962–82. My plan was to edit down what I'd found and present it to Ted on his seventieth birthday, in 2012 (Ted had some idea of what I was up to). He liked the manuscript, gave it a title— *The Age of Reasons*— and, happily, the book was published earlier this year.

Ted called things as he saw them and didn't suffer fools. He was in it for the long haul, had absolutely no illusions about who he was, and built his work to last (let's see where we all are in 200 years). He's the only person who has ever called me "babe." Words can't say how grateful I am to have been his friend.

Miles Champion is the editor of Ted Greenwald's *The Age of Reasons: Uncollected Poems 1969–1982* (Wesleyan University Press, 2016).



photo credit: Tim Davis

In Memoriam: Bill Berkson (1939 -2016)

MA SE PRESSO AL MATTIN DEL VER SI SOGNA

Truly, “it’s a poor sort of memory that only works backward.”

Of Bill, what can I tell you that is not perfectly obvious in his person and all of his work?

We went to different schools together. Where we studied the same lesson, that “love’s best habit is in seeming trust.”

The last of Bill’s mobile telephone number, 1609, is the year the London publisher Thomas Thorpe had printed, for the first time, William Shakespeare’s SONNETS. I didn’t call Bill but that I dialed that date, so often to make one, walking and talking with him, since when I don’t know, forever it seems.

“How curiously it had all been revealed to me! A book of Sonnets, published nearly three hundred years ago... had suddenly explained to me the whole story of my soul’s romance” – Oscar Wilde, 1889, picking up on what those poems recite. That they coalesce into a quip, a pole of orientation for a lifetime, its diction and music so exactly precise as to be opaque to all but those who are compact in their vision of the reality of angelic presence, its unfailing care. I haven’t known anyone with more sensible, practical awareness of this, in himself and in others, than Bill: nor anyone more gracefully able to express it.

Anyway, strangers in Paradise.

John Wieners thought Bill a prince among poets and said so. Kismet’s a Turkish word (qismet), after Arabic al-qisma, both meaning ‘one’s lot, fate.’ It needn’t only be felt darkly, as doom, it can just as well be felt as sweetly as a kiss. Nor need the romance of a soul’s memory only work backward.

Bill’s poetry, since Lawrenceville, terrifically accomplished as naturally as his behavior, along with his writing on art and his

lectures— no ‘discourse,’ poetic or otherwise, rather real talk— its fleet precision, lots and lots of it irrepressibly antic, his ever increasing, excited curiosity, his White Queen’s memory never trapped by nostalgic retrospection— ever Janus-like, existential indignities be damned, getting on with it, getting it done.

You can do no better than to revisit Heinrich Heine’s 1855 preface to *Poèmes et Légendes*, the passage apropos Gérard de Nerval, found dead January 26 of that year, the year before Heine, after years of great suffering, would himself die too young in Paris, whose writings would be incinerated several decades later in Berlin.

Heine’s words are not those of tribute but rather of profound affection for a friend who “truly was more soul than man. I would say the soul of an angel, however banal that expression.”

Once on the radio I heard Miles Davis tell a story about a dream he had had sometime after Gil Evans had passed. They were very close friends. Evans appeared to Miles in his dream. Miles asked, “Why did you have to die, man?” Evans replied, “I couldn’t do it any other way.”

Being human, who can? Moreover, what means that little word “it”?

I read Dante’s dream near dawn as “The Dream (of art and life)” – O’Hara’s words— the dream that isn’t merely true, but more to the point is prophetic. The dream of beauties Rose, that it might never die.

Like I said, what can I tell you?

Thus Bob Creeley writing his feelings for Willem de Kooning in 1979— as of “friends and heroes and teachers” (Bill)— “So—what’s left to say that he hasn’t? Surely you’ll see that point. Therefore – ‘it’s a

personal thing...”

The “thing” = “consummate human grace.”

Duncan McNaughton lives in San Francisco. His most recent book *TINY WINDOWS* (Auguste Press, 2014) is inscribed ‘to Godfrey & Berkson.’

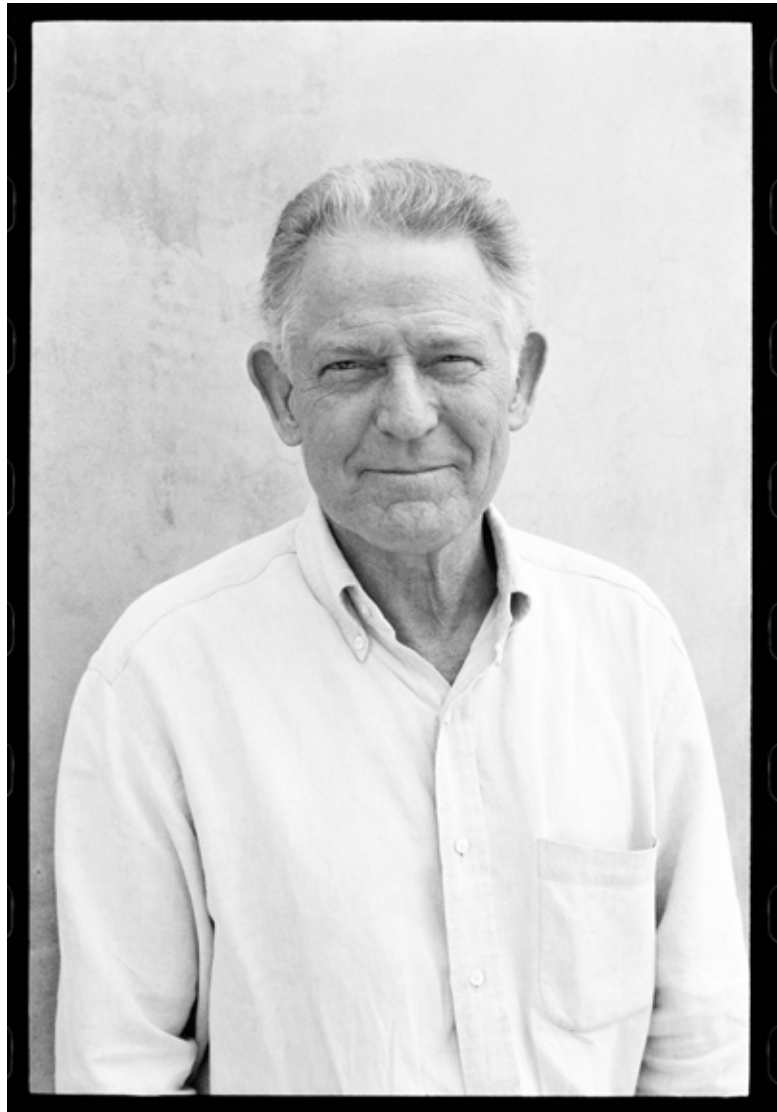


photo credit: Moses Berkson

LUNCH WITH BILL

Bill and I met up on June 10th for our “late morning / noonish gnosh” at Savor on 24th Street in San Francisco. We were celebrating our new books on the heels of our joint reading at the Green Arcade on May 31st: “the pleasures of last night must be followed by food and book giving,” read Bill’s email.

Savor’s entry was noon-shady when Bill in his fedora walked through the glass doors in silhouette. We hugged and went to sit in the sun where he gave me shrinkwrapped copies of a book of Allen Ruppersberg’s drawings and the *New York Painters and Poets* tome—I was shocked to receive this big brick of gold from Bill but he was skeptical (or bemused) that I didn’t even have it yet! Then he pulled out a copy of *Invisible Oligarchs*, his Russian travel journals that we had just wrapped up on UDP and said:

“I’ve been waiting to use this inscription but I saved it for you—” signing the book and handing it to me:

FOR JULIEN
FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE
(& APPRECIATION)
BILL

The waiter comes and Bill orders: Iced tea lemonade / Wheat toast with butter / Crisp bacon. I get the snow crab sandwich—“Great choice!” the waiter raves. I tell Bill that *Oligarchs* has great buzz—a review is in the pipes—“Who’s writing it?” Bill asks shrewdly—I’ve forgotten, will forward...

Bill wants to know if Matvei Yankelevich has said anything about his take on *IO*— nothing yet, but I tell Bill the story of little MY running his tricycle into Brezhnev’s shins at a summer *dacha* town outside Moscow, and Bill likes it. I tell him we must send a copy to Keith Gessen, friend of the *Presse* and writer on Russia for such magazines as the *New Yorker*. I am grateful to Keith for introducing me to Takahashi Sushi that night Matvei proposed to his now ex-wife, down on one knee at Astor Place— red wine in paper bag!

Bill grins— and now I remember the poet Kevin Opstedal telling me how much he loved to make Bill laugh. But, he wonders: Can you get a table at this sushi joint? Must go early, I tell him. Doors at 5:30...

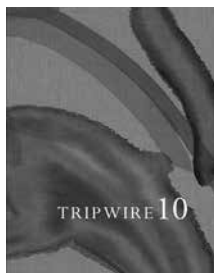
We talk shop. Where to send new poems? not enough mags we’re thrilled with. My sandwich arrives, looks like a deep-fried crab in a Murphy bed, Bill crunches on his bacon, we are gossiping about magazines, weblinks, hot young writers, cold leads and the kind of writing that, while good, draws too much attention to itself. I tell him I’m looking for writing that’s less intentional. He smiles again and I think (whether or not he agrees) that he takes pleasure in my opinion— and this makes me feel happy and confident: it helps me see myself in the League of Poets. And now we’re talking about our days as autograph hounds. He remembers dodging cops to get baseball stars to sign glossies on the platforms of Grand Central Station in the early 50s— and I rifle my wallet for my Willie Mays autograph, which I’ve carried on me for 35 years, and find it’s vanished! Lunch is over and as we’re saying goodbye at the stoplights Bill yells out, “Love to your wife and girls!”

When Cedar Sigo called to tell me that Bill was gone, a part of me went with him. We were undergoing a transformation from poetry collaborators into close friends. Bill was my ally in poetry and I was proud to be his friend. I’ll always remember the time I was driving out to teach my class at San Quentin, when Bill called. I happened to know he had just received his first copies of *Invisible Ollies*, as he sometimes called it, and pulled over just after the bridge. This was a man who’d once told me that one of his lifelong ambitions was to publish a book with zero typos.

Had we cracked the code? I answered the phone with my heart in my throat, and heard Bill’s voice: “It looks great! Connie and I both love it. *I’m happy.*”

Julien Poirier lives in Berkeley, where he teaches, edits and writes poetry. His latest book, *Out of Print*, was published this year by City Lights.

NEW FROM TRIPWIRE THIS SUMMER



#10 CAConrad Special Feature

Featuring over 120 pages of work by, for, and about CAConrad, along with another 200+ pages of poems, art, and reviews. Anne Boyer, Juliana Spahr, Danielle LaFrance, Cesar Moro, Frank Sherlock, Allison Cobb, Marianne Morris, Heriberto Yépez, Frances Kruk, TC Tolbert, Erica Kaufman, and much much more... Spring 2016, 340 pages.

spdbooks.org



#11 ¡Pop!

330 pages of poetry, art, reviews & more from over a dozen countries, including Douglas Kearney, Edwin Torres, Dawn Lundy Martin, Nada Gordon, Angelica Freitas, Bruce Boone, Kate Durbin, Hiromi Ito, Nyein Way, Kim Rosenfield, Paolo Javier, Kasey Mohammad, Angelo Suarez, Ye Mimi, Mae Yway, & much more...

tripwirejournal.com

Emergence - Surface - Be 2016

The Project's Fellowship for Emerging Poets

Former ESB mentor Edwin Torres spoke with one 2015-16 fellow/mentor pair about the experience of working together.

Edwin Torres:

Hello both — Is there a place where you see each other within each other's work? Or perhaps that opening didn't present itself until you started working with each other. The follow up would be a somewhat generic yet focused query pertaining to this mentorship; how do you see your own work evolving when you let yourself be open to someone else's input?

Tracie Morris:

Édgar and I are radically different in terms of our approach to language and our perception of how it works. Édgar is a visual artist as well as a poet and I'm almost the opposite. I *think* textually and not visually. If anything, I probably translate "visuals" into "texts." I don't really see myself in his work, specifically.

But what I do see is Édgar and I as part of a larger community of experimental writers who like to think about and reconfigure form. We also work with multiple media (my other one happens to be music).

I've seen Édgar work develop in several interesting ways since we started working together but I'll leave it to him to comment on his own process and development.

ET: Yes, I see the reconfiguring of form as an essential aspect to artistic transitions. I think one crossover the three of us have is the desire for transition; to present language outside its established narrative. Whether textually, visually, sonically... the senses come into play, bringing life and the outside world into the language. And that's a bridge into another point; considering work that explores border and territory, whether crossing disciplines or cultural barriers, how do you see excluding/including the self when creating work?

I realize when I get myself too much into my own head and the work starts preaching to myself, that's when I know it's time for me to look outside, at the world, to include its intermorphed into my particular ear, as it were, to bring me back to a larger community. Is there a place where you find yourself too far in your work and how does that either become the work or transition from it?

TM: Hmmm. I don't know if I see myself as part of transiting or transition per se, more of establishing alternative "places." "Setting up camp" if you will, pun intended I guess. At least sometimes I'm addressing camp and reconfiguring it, as it appears in improvisation.

I don't worry about going "too far" in my work but that doesn't mean that I publish, or present, everything that "shows up." I go far as it'll take me, whether I "like" it or not. Sometimes, it lacks "comfort" but that's the gig, as they say.

get, from Édgar's work is also this effort at finding/identifying a center, irrespective of comfort. I think that's why when I encountered it, it hit me "in the chest" even its raw, earlier state. (The chest being *my* center, or at least, the center of the chest at the heart, where I was hit.) As his work has been refined, I feel more of a clarity in what that center is to him; it's like moving away the filter.

Interestingly though, I feel very differently about the painting/visuals that accompany the text. I "feel" them as disruptive -- "shaking me up" in the context of the written work. Like the text, there is an extremity to the range (literally) of the visuals that feels like a supportive, different, counterweight to his text.

Édgar Javier Ulloa: I would agree with Tracie's observation about our different—or inverse so to say—styles. I do tend to focus on visual elements mixed with my poetry. She and I have talked before about the dissemination of our work. While I understand her advice to be selective about publishing to the public, I also am very interested in the idea of incomplete ideas and moreover, the notion of a constant work in progress. My blog www.mijuaritos.wordpress.com is perhaps the best example of this. I do tend to publish things when inspiration strikes as a way of sustaining an interaction with my followers and continuing to roll out and develop my work. I put "beta" in the header of my blog to refer to the notion that the content of the site is constantly in flux and is always open to be edited, responded to, and reconfigured.

Going off of what Tracie mentioned earlier about my focus on visual art, I do incorporate visuals into my poetry and poetic experimentations in order to give people more points of access to my work even though I started writing song lyrics back in Juárez City, México before I immerse into poetry. For example, I use a bilingual multi-folded zine as a presentation card. The cover is marked by P.A.T.R.I.A., an acronym I came out—under the influence of an Uruguayan visual poet,—that means both "homeland" in Spanish, and stands for "Por Amor Tanto Radiante Infinito Amor." When I give this booklet out, people always react when they hold that in their hand. It incorporates my paintings, poems, translations and contact information in a post-modern form. So rather than a



photo credit: Rachel Eliza Griffiths

What I got, and continue to

Edwin Torres conversation with Tracie Morris and Édgar Javier Ulloa

“business card”, which is supposed to be something tactile to remember me by when I am meeting new people, it’s more of a microcosm of my “self” and my work that speaks more to people than a clean white business card.

In ways like this, I am regularly experimenting with how to effectively merge media to engage readers. Sometimes it’s projections with a performance, audio accompaniment to a performance, or painting/scans/printed material incorporated with poetry. It’s all an effort to more accurately express my ideas beyond poetry and to engage people in ways that other poets or artists do. Sometimes I use all of the sensorial elements instead of just text on a page or a body on the stage. In this way, I like to think I am pushing the boundaries of the genre and encouraging others to participate in the work and create things themselves, regardless of how creative production may be qualified or classified.

ET: Yes, I understand that aspect of pushing boundaries to encourage pushing, the act of the push can be the gauntlet thrown, right? I see it as empowering the audience to have their own boundaries by sparking new ones where the work being created is not created with intent, rather it’s allowed to function without specific goal — the process becomes the art, the process is the boundary.

With multi-lingual work, that process can’t help but have political intention (your booklet as business card where the action of your greeting has immediate personal implications) however the stage being set remains an open field where the audience is given a chance to bring their own history to greet yours — the questions sparked by the elemental transfer of self.

A continual work-in-progress is the backbone of a living breathing poetics. When I did the Emerge-Surface-Be program, I found myself in constant quiet collaboration with my partner even when we wouldn’t meet for weeks — the benefit of a long program like this is to afford time for relationships and projects to root.

When it comes to collaboration among the disciplines, there must be a point where a newer self is developed to understand a newer non-verbal language, an always-there self, waiting for a pre-existing ancient inner awakening to return to. I imagine

working with each other will awaken boundaries yet formed.

TM: To your question about the inner self emerging/waiting to emerge, I’d have to go back to the ancient concept of the “Muse.” Rather than me feeling that I’m connecting to different “selves” — or aspects of *my* self, I should say — I wait for the muse to tell me what to do. I guess one could describe it as “process” but it’s more personified for me. That personification to someone that’s not “my” self, allows me to work in ways that aren’t invested in ego: not invested in where I think I should be going or where I wish I’d go.

I think what Édgar said about process and the invitation to letting the audience explore the unfinished is something I do through live improvisation rather than print. Although in both media the poems continue to emerge, the collaboration with “liveness” itself as well as with the energy of the audience implies that it’s unfinished/incomplete but also intimate/special to that time and place. Improvised sound is so specific: it’s based on things like room tone, audience energy, time of day, etc. It’s finished in that moment but “unfinished” in others. In this way, sound poems “fail” when recorded or experienced on “youtube”, etc. The advice I gave to Édgar about how to choose (which I certainly invited him to disregard) was about what one decides to present to the public as “printed”. It’s a “fixed” state, to me has a different, heavier weight. But I don’t mind, of course, that Édgar and I have different perceptions of what much it “weighs.” Are sound waves lighter than paper? I assume so, but I might be wrong about that. In fact, depending upon the artist and the work, I’m definitely wrong about that.

Thanks Édgar and Edwin.

ET: That’s an interesting tangent, the volume and shape that the message takes, whether it’s paper or sound wave — the shifting state of the work itself. Materiality doesn’t often get addressed in poem-making except in live performance, where the person creating the work becomes the work — the liveness that you’re talking about, manifesting itself as weight, body, presence. Thank you both for your time.



photo credit: Laura Blüer

Tracie Morris’ most recent book is *handholding: 5 kinds* (Kore Press, 2016). She is co-editor of Best Experimental Writing (Wesleyan University Press 2016) with Charles Bernstein. Tracie is Professor and Coordinator of the MFA program in Performance + Performance Studies at Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, New York.

Édgar J. Ulloa Luján is a performance artist and poet from Ciudad Juárez, México. He founded a pioneering multimedia poetry blog (mijuaritos.wordpress.com), when his hometown was the most dangerous city of the world.

Edwin Torres found poetry in New York City’s East Village in the early 90’s. The neighborhood’s eclectic growl shaped his DIY approach to language. His books include, *Americoscopia* (University of Arizona Press), *Yes Thing No Thing* (Roof Books), and *The PoPedology Of An Ambient Language* (Atelos Books). Anthologies include: *Angels of the Americlypse: New Latin@ Writing*, *Post-Modern American Poetry Vol. 2*, and *Aloud: Voices From The Nuyorican Poets Café*.

New Books from **Hanging Loose Press**

Mark Pawlak

Reconnaissance

"A consistency of vision and linguistic vigor I can only marvel at and applaud. Pawlak is among the very best poets working today," – Pablo Medina. Of earlier work: "Marvelous poems...strange, haunting, luminous" – Hilton Obenzinger. Celebrates "how insane and touching language can be" – Kimiko Hahn. Paper, \$18.



Frances LeFevre

Dearest Annie, you wanted a report on Berkson's class

Letters to Anne Waldman from her mother, wonderfully evoking the mid-Sixties downtown poetry scene. "Do we have another such mother/daughter correspondence anywhere else in the world, ever? It is wonderful stuff," – Eileen Myles. Paper, \$18.



Patricia Traxler Naming the Fires

Praise for her last collection: "Gorgeous writing, and devastating..." – Marie Howe. "An outstanding and enviable performance" – Ted Kooser. "Intelligent, careful work by a gifted and generous poet." – Karen Volkman. "Thrilling" – *Publishers Weekly*. Paper, \$18.



Hoyt Jacobs Translating Requiem

Winner of the Loose Translations Prize. Poems and translations (particularly of Anna Akhmatova) by a young Queens College graduate, who died in a bicycle accident. Paper, \$18.



Joel Lewis My Shaolin: A Poem of Staten Island

"Poet as prime responder... ever on call. It's Joel Lewis with the news!" – Clark Coolidge. "An astute...poet with ears for the telling and eyes for the unsightly," – Gary Lenhart. Paper, \$18.



Leonard Gontarek Take Your Hand Out of My Pocket, Shiva

"A large masterpiece consisting of small poems," – Hal Sirowitz. "Deliberate, bare, and infused with a searing humor, these poems hiss and bloom at the same time," – Ada Limón. Paper, \$18.



Hanging Loose Magazine #106:

Collages by Helen Adam. Writing by Sherman Alexie, Martine Bellen, Mary Ferrari, Frank Murphy, Jack Anderson, Caroline Knox, Justin Jamail, John Koethe, David Wagoner, Steven Schrader, Rebecca Newth, and many more. Plus our famous section of work by amazing high school writers. \$11.

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Art: Katharine Betty (KB) Jones



"Chair," 12" x 12" watercolor on paper, 2015

As a figurative painter, the body certainly plays a major role in my painting practice, however, I am most interested in the relationship between mind and landscape. In my work, I view landscape as a 'way of seeing' that is determined by specific historical and cultural forces; not solely geographic, but biological and personal as well. Another way to put it would be that there are no landscapes, only contexts. In these recent watercolors, I focus on domestic surroundings: a couch, a bed, laundry being hung out to dry. Making paintings is an activity that takes time, and painting can abstract the rawness of our most normal activities. Communication is bound up with ways of looking, and my work thinks through how the most basic human traits shape how and what we see.

Katharine Betty (KB) Jones was born in Huntsville, Texas in 1979 and earned a BA in Visual Art and Philosophy from Columbia University in 2002. She received an MFA in Painting and Drawing from the University of New Mexico in 2014. KB has exhibited in New York, the Southwest and internationally. Her most recent project beautified a wall for the Keap Fourth Community Garden in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. Drawing inspiration from laundry lines, she collaborated with students from El Puente Academy for Peace and Justice, creating an evolving outdoor art installation.

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 or call 212.674.0910.

FRI 9/23

SPECIAL EVENT: Yoshimasu Gozo

Yoshimasu Gozo, born in Tokyo, has given performances worldwide, and has received many literary and cultural awards, including the Takami Jun Prize, the Rekitei Prize, the Purple Ribbon, and the 50th Mainichi Art Award for Poetry. This reading coincides with Gozo's *Alice Iris Red Horse: Selected Poems of Yoshimasu Gozo* from New Directions and will feature Gozo in performance with special guests.

MON 9/26

6:30-8:30PM at Center for Humanities

PANEL: In. On. Or About the Premises: A Celebration of the Work of Paul Blackburn

For a full description of this Giant Night platform event, see page 7.

WED 9/28

READING: In. On. Or About the Premises: A Celebration of the Work of Paul Blackburn

For a full description of this Giant Night platform event, see page 7.

WED 10/5

Sara Deniz Akant & Jasmine Gibson

Sara Deniz Akant is the author of *Babette*, as well as *Parades* (OmniDawn, 2014), and *Latronic Strag* (Persistent Editions, 2015). She studies writing at the CUNY Grad Center and teaches at Medgar Evers College. Her work has appeared most recently in *The Brooklyn Rail*, *The Bennington Review*, *jubilat*, and *Lana Turner*.

Jasmine Gibson has written for *Mask Magazine* and *LIES Vol II: Journal of Materialist feminism*, *Queen Mob's*, *NON*, *The Capilano Review* and has published a chapbook, *Drapetomania* (Commune Editions, 2015).

MON 10/10

Jameson Fitzpatrick & Ali Power

Jameson Fitzpatrick is the author of the chapbook *Morrisroe: Erasures*, which comprises 24 versions of a single text by the late artist Mark Morrisroe, and his poems have appeared in *The Awl*, *BuzzFeed Reader*, *Poetry*, *Prelude*, and elsewhere.

Ali Power is the author of the book-length poem *A Poem for Record Keepers* (Argos Books, 2016) and the co-editor of the volume *New York School Painters & Poets: Neon in Daylight* (Rizzoli, 2014). She is

pursuing a master's degree in social work at New York University and co-curates the KGB Monday Night Poetry Reading Series.

WED 10/12

Todd Colby, Adam Fitzgerald & Vincent Katz

Todd Colby has published six books of poetry. His latest book, *Splash State*, was published by The Song Cave in 2014. Todd's most recent poetry and art have appeared in *Poetry*, *Columbia: a journal of literature and art*, *Denver Quarterly*, and *The Brooklyn Rail*.

Adam Fitzgerald's first book of poems *The Late Parade* was published in 2013. Recent poems can be found in *Poetry*, *The New Yorker*, *BOMB*, *Granta* and elsewhere. His newest book of poems, *George Washington*, was just published by W. W. Norton's historic Liveright imprint.

Vincent Katz is the author of *Southness* (Lunar Chandelier Press, 2016) and *Swimming Home* (Nightboat Books, 2015), as well as *The Complete Elegies of Sextus Propertius* (Princeton University Press, 2004). He is the editor of *Black Mountain College: Experiment in Art* (MIT Press, 2002; reprinted 2013).

FRI 10/14

Señal Series Celebration

Join us for bilingual readings in Spanish and English with authors and translators from the Señal Series, featuring: **Luis Felipe Fabre** (with translation by **John Pluecker**), **Stalina Emmanuelle Villarreal** (reading **Sor Juana**), **Pablo Katchadjian** (with **Rebekah Smith**), and **Florencia Castellano**. Señal Series is a co-publication between *BOMB*, *Libros Antena Books*, and *Ugly Duckling Presse* that publishes two chapbooks a year, linked either thematically, conceptually, or trans-historically, troubling received ideas around what the terms "contemporary" and "Latin America" might represent.

MON 10/17

Anaïs Duplan & Loma (Christopher Soto)

Anaïs Duplan is the author of *Take This Stallion*. Her poems and essays have appeared or are forthcoming in/on: *Hyperallergic*, *Boston Review*, *The Journal*, *FENCE*, *PBS Newshour*, the *Ploughshares* blog, *Asymptote Journal's* blog, and other places. She directs the Center for Afrofuturist Studies and is an MFA

candidate at the Iowa Writers' Workshop.

Christopher Soto aka **Loma** was named one of "10 Up and Coming Latinx Poets You Need to Know" by Remezcla. Soto's first chapbook, *Sad Girl Poems*, was published by Sibling Rivalry Press. He is currently working on a full-length poetry manuscript about police violence and mass incarceration. He founded *Nepantla: A Journal Dedicated to Queer Poets of Color* with the Lambda Literary Foundation and co-founded *The UndocuPoets Campaign*.

WED 10/19

Garrett Caples & Hoa Nguyen

Garrett Caples is the author of the poetry collection, *Power Ballads* (Wave), a book of essays, *Retrievals* (Wave), and a pamphlet, *Quintessence of the Minor: Symbolist Poetry in English* (Wave). He co-edited *Incidents of Travel in Poetry: New and Selected Poems by Frank Lima* (City Lights), *Particulars of Place* by Richard O. Moore (OmniDawn), and *Collected Poems of Philip Lamantia* (California).

Hoa Nguyen's poetry collections include *As Long As Trees Last*, *Red Juice: Poems 1998-2008*, and *Violet Energy Ingots* from Wave Books. Nguyen teaches at Ryerson University, for Miami University's low residency MFA program, for the Milton Avery School for Fine Arts at Bard College, and in a long-running, private poetics workshop.

MON 10/24

It's After the End of the World, Don't You Know That Yet?: Writing in the Shadow of Human Extinction

This evening, consisting of readings, screenings and discussion, will focus on the question of writing in the late anthropocene. With the question of major shifts in global climate, foodways and migration patterns, and the potential for major political and economic upheaval, this event will pose questions about writing's contemporary role and the ways it is being reshaped by the presence of these world-altering forces. The evening will feature writers and artists **Pedro Neves Marques** and **Mariana Silva**, poets **Evelyn Reilly** and **Adjua Greaves**, and filmmakers **Adam** and **Zack Khalil** their focuses ranging from ecocide and genetically modified organisms to indigenous counternarratives of "the end" and the survivability and "mattering," in philosopher Judith Butler's terms, of writing.

WED 10/26**Myung Mi Kim & Juliana Spahr**

Myung Mi Kim's books include *Penury* (Omnidawn), *Commons* (University of California Press), *DURA* (Sun & Moon and Nightboat Books), *The Bounty* (Chax Press), and *Under Flag* (Kelsey Street Press). Kim is a Professor of English and Director of the Poetics Program at the University at Buffalo.

Juliana Spahr wrote *Army of Lovers* with David Buuck. She has edited, with Stephanie Young, *A Megaphone: Some Enactments, Some Numbers, and Some Essays about the Continued Usefulness of Crotchless-pants-and-a-machine-gun Feminism*, with Joan Retallack, *Poetry & Pedagogy: the Challenge of the Contemporary*, and with Claudia Rankine, *American Women Poets in the 21st Century*. Her most recent book is *That Winter the Wolf Came* (Commune Editions).

FRI 10/28**Vi Khi Nao & Jayson P. Smith**

Vi Khi Nao is the author of two novellas, *Swans In Half-Mourning* (2013) and *The Vanishing Point of Desire* (2011), and a poetry collection, *The Old Philosopher*. Her manuscript, *A Brief Alphabet of Torture*, won the 2016 Ronald Sukenick Innovative Fiction Contest. In Fall 2016, Coffee House Press will publish her novel *Fish in Exile*.

Jayson P. Smith is a writer, editor, & educator. Jayson has been the recipient of fellowships from The Conversation, Millay Colony for the Arts, & Callaloo as well as scholarships from Cave Canem & The New Harmony Writers' Workshop. Jayson is currently a Mentor at Urban Word NYC & Creative Director for The Other Black Girl Collective.

WED 11/2**Keith Waldrop & Rosmarie Waldrop**

Keith Waldrop is the author of *Selected Poems* (Omnidawn), *Transcendental Studies* (U of California Press), and more than a dozen other books of poems. With Rosmarie Waldrop, he edits Burning Deck Press in Providence, RI.

Rosmarie Waldrop's most recent books are *Gap Gardening: Selected Poems and Driven to Abstraction* (New Directions). She is the author of novels *The Hanky of Pippin's Daughter* and *A Form/of Taking/It All*. With Keith Waldrop, she edits Burning Deck Press.

MON 11/7**Open Reading**

Open readings 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. Suggested reading time is approx. 3 minutes. Sign-in at 7:45pm.

WED 11/9**(Re)Defining Downtown**

For a full description of this Giant Night platform event, see page 7.

FRI 11/11**Artists Love Poets**

For a full description of this Giant Night platform event, see page 7.

MON 11/14**Lauren Levin & Eric Sneathen**

Lauren Levin grew up in New Orleans and lives in Richmond, CA with her family. Her first full-length book, *The Braid*, is forthcoming with Krupskaya Books in October 2016. Recent work can be found in the chapbook *Only the Dead Are Never Anxious* (Mondo Bummer), in the journal *Open House*, and forthcoming in the journal *Hold*.

Eric Sneathen splits his time between Oakland and UC Santa Cruz, where he is a PhD student in Literature. His poetry has been published by *Mondo Bummer*, *littletell*, *Faggot Journal*, and *The Equalizer*. His first collection, *Snail Poems*, is forthcoming from Krupskaya. He is also the editor and producer of *Macaroni Necklace*, a DIY literary zine and reading series featuring (mostly) writers who have not yet published a book-length manuscript.

WED 11/16**John Ashbery's Litany**

John Ashbery's *Litany* will be presented in the Sanctuary by the performance group Small Theaters Around The Country. With readers **Daniel Brian Jones** and **Anya Saffir**, and dancers **Kayla Farrish**, **Pierre Guilbault**, **Sarah Haarmann**, and **Pavel Machuca-Zavarzin**. Broadides with excerpts from the poem will be printed by three artist/printer teams: **Dara Cerv + NSFW Presse**, **Todd Colby + Richard O'Russa**, and **Christine Hou + Damask Press**. This event will take place in the Sanctuary.

FRI 11/18**Helaine Gawlica & Tara Hart**

Helaine Gawlica specializes in archiving, curating, and exhibiting performance art collections. At New York University, Helaine processes performance materials for the Hemispheric Institute Digital Video Library (HIDVL) and the institute's physical archive. Helaine is currently working with Martha Wilson on the forthcoming collection "Franklin Furnace: Performance and Politics" for HIDVL.

Tara Hart is an archivist based in Brooklyn, NY. Hart currently works as the Archives Manager at the Whitney Museum of American Art. Prior to joining the Whitney, Hart performed archival work at the Guggenheim, the New Museum, and the Fales Library and Special Collections. Her writing recently appeared in *Archive Journal*.

MON 11/28**Omniscient Tape Recorder, Part 1**

For a full description of this Giant Night platform event, see page 7.

WED 11/30**C. S. Giscombe & Arlo Quint**

C. S. Giscombe's poetry books are *Prairie Style*, *Giscombe Road*, *Here*, etc.; his book of linked essays is *Into and Out of Dislocation*. *Ohio Railroads* was published in 2014 and *Border Towns* will appear in 2016. Projects underway include a prose book titled *Railroad Sense* and a poetry book titled *Negro Mountain*.

Arlo Quint is the author of *Wires and Lights* (Rust Buckle), *Death to Explosions* (Skysill), and *Drawn In* (Fewer & Further). He collaborated with writer Charles Wolski on *Check Out My Lifestyle* (Well Greased).

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The Greatness of Robert Glück

"I only know that I love strength in my friends / And greatness."

—Jack Spicer

What does it mean to call something or someone great, to acknowledge greatness? We call great the sublime and wonderful facts of nature, like a canyon, and a waterfall, a pride of lions licking each other in a field. We call artists and their works great, like Rembrandt and Alice Notley and Janet Jackson. We say that the loftiest developments of human thought are great, so we say that W.E.B. Dubois and G.W.F. Hegel and Claudia Jones are great.

Of course, we also use the term to measure our most ordinary states of feeling and desire. How am I today? *Great*, thanks for asking, I say, wildly overstating the case. Would I like another glass of wine? That would be, I exaggerate, *great*. Greatness conflates almost anything of positive value, from the softest and most minor to the vast and incomprehensible. Greatness is capacious, is itself great, it is the equal sign between the mundane and the tremendous.

For a while, the new collection of prose by Robert Glück, published by Semiotexte earlier this year, was titled *The Greatness of Kathy Acker and Other Essays*. The details of how this title changed, to *Communal Nude*, belong to the sacred world of gossip, but this vestigial title recalls how central friends and lovers are to Bob's writing. His books have names in their titles so often it is almost a rule: *Andy*, *Jack the Modernist*, *Margery Kempe*, *Denny Smith*, and his novel in progress *About Ed*. Each of these figures is formative and contributes—no, embodies—crucial parts of the story that Bob tells in those books, although the story is always more, other, greater than even they are.

I am hard pressed to think of another contemporary writer for whom the stakes of love and friendship are higher: Bob's works constitute a theory of camaraderie, intimacy, and sex in which the destabilization and permeability effected by love and friendship become key themes. The openness that love requires, the holes it depends on and in turn opens up, appear in this early sentence in Bob's classic novel *Jack the Modernist*: "I opened up in Jack a territory named Bob; I anticipated in me a sister city named Jack." Love is literally world-making in Bob's books, which doggedly refuse the contemporary cynicism about love, what it can do and how it can be sung.

Bob's books are largely about love and friendship, but he also invites friends and lovers in their making. These collaborative gestures underscore the radical openness of Bob's writing. For his first collection of prose, *Elements*, Glück asked the friends he quoted to revise their own dialogue, to make it as much as possible their own. In *Margery Kempe*, Bob's friends sent him detailed descriptions of how their bodies looked beneath clothes, how their bodies brayed and clenched when they came; also how their bodies suffered from sickness and approaching death. These friends became, in the narrative of the book, bishops and villagers, their warts and bumps transposed to the large supporting cast around Margery and Jesus.

Addressing this formal gesture in *Margery* and other works, Bob writes,

These little nuggets of physicality, which are far too personal to actually identify anyone, take the form of a community's expectations, become objective. I wanted to install a contradiction in my book, a community of bodily anarchism—that is, the kind of community we live in.

This formal vulnerability to other voices, registers, texts, histories, which constitutes the anarchist community of bodies, connects Glück's writing to his friend Acker's, whose writing also closely binds appropriations from canonical literature and the most intimate details of her personal (sex) life.

"The Greatness of Kathy Acker" is one of the key essays in *Communal Nude*, originally included in *Lust for Life*, the tribute to Acker edited by Carla Harryman and Avital Ronell. It is at once an homage, a piece of literary criticism, a reflection on friendship and a picture of an extraordinary scene of 1970's experimental writing. In it, Bob offers a theory of greatness, explaining Acker's greatness in terms of her love and devotion as a buddy and the importance of her work as an artist. Emphasizing the baroque and grotesque strategies Acker used to keep her readers in a constant state of vertigo, her techniques of radical appropriation and alienation unfold in the context of her fantastic and great-hearted presence as a friend and confidante.

"The Greatness of Kathy Acker" relies on the vastness of the signifier, the greatness of how things and people can be great, to share with us his sense of how she was great and how great she was, her heart and her art. But as a concluding thought, Glück offers a more particular definition of greatness in writing: "Kathy Acker had the highest ambition: to reorient literature in a true relation to the present and to crack that moment wide open." This theory of time and writing insists throughout Glück's works. It is an element he identifies, in "Long Note on New Narrative," as the power of transgressive writing:

There's no manual; transgressive writing shocks by articulating the present, the one thing impossible to put into words because a

language does not yet exist to describe the present.

At this moment in the "Long Note," Bob is discussing Bataille's work. But it is just as relevant to a reading of his own: the greatness of his writing refuses the usual sentence on the contemporary (that it cannot be uttered), by elevating the meaning of what we think is most ordinary and liberating (our regular passions and desperations), permitting them to appear in writing as apocalyptically as they actually feel inside us. Like a good strong acid, but without the existential dread and groovy visuals, Bob's books actualize a motivating and generous permission, recalling Bataille's figure of the "Don Juan of the possible." Reading Bob, the world seems bigger, better, broader, deeper; more delicious, more nutritious, less vicious, more viscous. In other words, it encourages belief in the world, belief that the world is great, and horrible, and has earned our praise and outrage.

Now I must for one moment reflect on the stunning artistry one encounters reading the pages of these books. I could easily spare you the rest of this homage and collage my favorite lines. We could read them out loud together while sipping martinis and slurping oysters, winsome, suddenly more attractive somehow, tipsy and aroused. But instead I'll restrain myself to one example of what I mean.

A figure which recurs throughout Glück's writing is the equal sign. I sort of wonder if this is in part a playful joke at the expense of the L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E writers, those corny equal signs, with whom Bob and his friends read, wrote, argued, and partied. But the insistence of the equal sign as a rhetorical figure in his work is not so small or petty

as to be a mere literary jab. Its corollary rhetorical figure in his prose is perhaps the astonishing use of simile. Who, having read it, will ever forget the moment in *Jack the Modernist* when Bob, rimming Jack, observes that his ass “smelled like the inside of a pumpkin?” Last summer, visiting from Sweden and giving a reading in San Francisco, he compared a former lover’s body to the experience of “eating a peach over a sink.” I’m in permanent awe of the sensuousness of these similes, which defy the austerity of logical comparison, which spurt and leak and overflow, but are still precise enough to warp the future of asses and peaches, as you prefer, forever.

I think of these similes, among other rhetorical excellences in his prose, as Bob’s “discoveries.” I use the word to describe the crucial *study* Bob undertook with his friend Bruce Boone in the late 1970’s. As “New Narrative,” it directly influenced and shaped a generation of writers in the Bay Area, and continues to do so. New Narrative, like so many moments (movements?) in the history of Bay Area writing, does not cohere as a school of writing in the strict sense of adhering to hard aesthetic lines or privileging formal qualities of the writing against other kinds of expression. This is so despite the fact that the Bay is frequently described as a place where totalizing theories of writing and politics emerge, where all the poets fall in line, from the supposed hegemony of West Coast L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E writers to the “Bay Area Poets” hashtag of recent Twitter wars. Glück, reminiscing about writing in a milieu in which two or three hardline megalomaniacs tried to arrogate value in writing for their own agendas, offers a blueprint for variousness. A blueprint which is borne out by his writing, and one which guides those of us who follow.

In the “Long Note,” he makes a brief manifesto against the climate of prescriptive aesthetics which arrive when poetry wars flare:

I wanted to write with a total continuity and total disjunction since I experienced the world (and myself) as continuous and infinitely divided. That was my ambition for writing. Why should a work of literature be organized by one pattern of engagement? Why should a ‘position’ be maintained regarding the size of the gaps between units of meaning?... I wanted the pleasures and politics of the fragment and

Jack the Modernist: “you have your cake and eat it.”

* * *

I have always loved Rob Halpern’s description of reading Boone’s novel *Century of Clouds* in the San Francisco Public Library. Before Nightboat reprinted the book in 2009, it was impossible to find. A literal rumor. Halpern narrates his discovery in the introduction he wrote for the reissue. Unable to check out

that you’re never going to be the same.

I’m such a sap that, reading Rob’s introduction in advance of the novel’s re-release, I literally retraced his steps, reading Boone’s extraordinary novel over a sequence of lunch breaks when I still worked downtown. And it fucking ruled. But I recall this largely to echo how first encountering Robert Glück’s books made *me* feel. In 2003, I checked out *Margery Kempe* from the

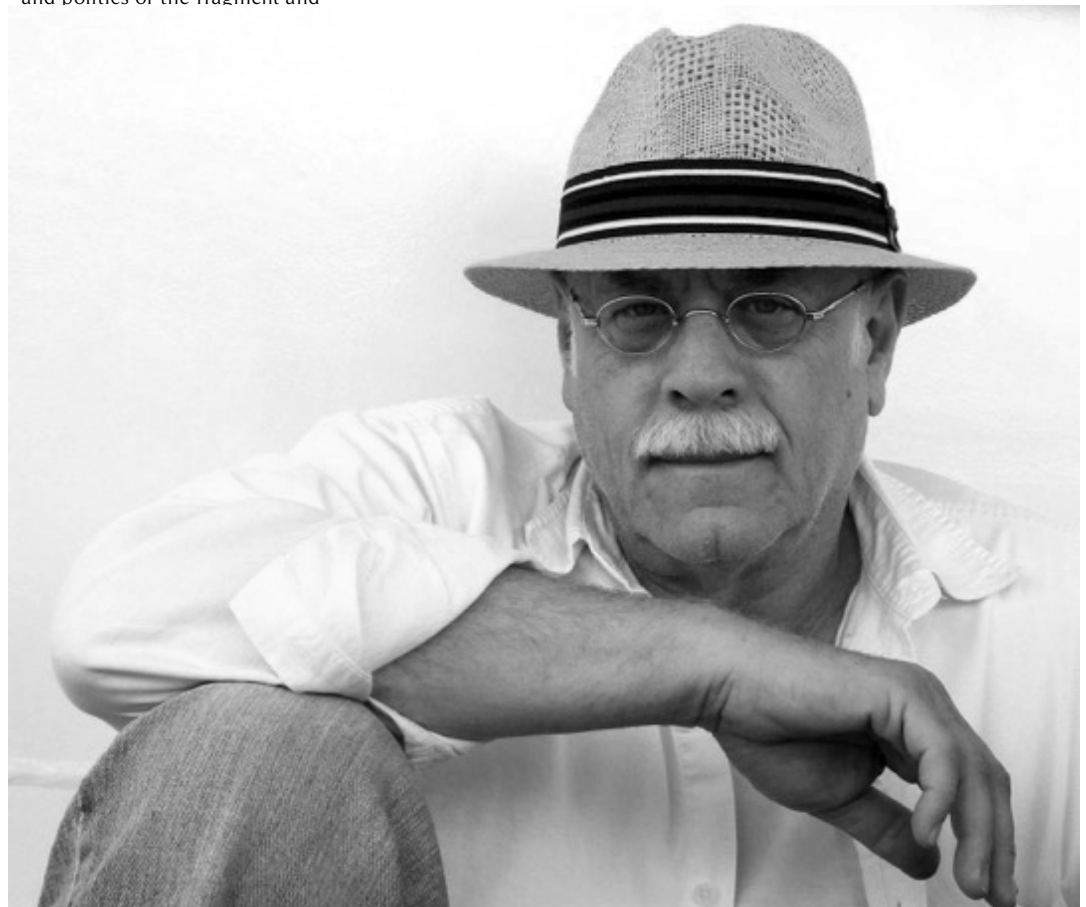


Photo credit: Xavi Permanyer Bel

the pleasures and politics of story, gossip, fable, and case history; the randomness of chance and a sense of inevitability; sincerity while using appropriation and pastiche.

Glück’s books “borrow” appropriation as one of many modes of affirming the self in the world, an affirmation that obviously includes negation as part of ordinary social life. After the passage above, Bob cites Barrett Watten’s description of

the book, Halpern decides to read it right there in the library’s gay and lesbian reading room:

two hours later I emerged sensing the shape of a world--was it this world?--where writing and desire, friendship and critique, become one another equally and reciprocally to inform a politics. It was one of those life-changing reading experiences when you don’t know exactly what’s happening to you, but you know

San Francisco State Library on more or less a whim, if by whim we can understand a preexisting rumor of greatness that insisted itself until it finally became too compelling to ignore.

After a late night class, I went home to my shitty apartment in the Tenderloin, stopping off for a pint of whiskey and a can of ginger ale, my nightcap in those days of filth and alcoholism.

No one was around, and I settled into a crumbling living room chair, a chair too gross to even be “easy,” made myself a drink, and planned to read for an hour or so before bed. Well, I didn’t go to bed that night. By the time I went to sleep, the whiskey and ginger ale were long metabolized, I had finished the book, and my life had changed irrevocably.

It’s hard to identify exactly what moved me so much, it was almost too enormous to name. I had been a student of classical literature, romanticisms, modernisms, select avant-garde traditions, the writing of my friends in the Bay. I had been exposed to countless writers in these traditions who practiced a poetics of narrowing-in, exclusion, limitation, imitation, reigning in. But I had never encountered a writing that could do everything the way Bob’s books can.

When I woke up later that afternoon, I was a changed (obsessed) person. I read everything I could find of Bob’s, and this curriculum led to an expanded contextualization of New Narrative writing. But the completist endeavor to read all of Bob’s books has been almost too easy to achieve over the years. Texts like “Long Note on New Narrative” existed online, URLs I visited like one visits family, *you can go home again*, returning to find the meaning of my life. This is why, for those of us who kneel at the squirmy altar of this writing, *Communal Nude* is practically messianic. 380 pages of mostly new-to-us Bob. At last.

The scope of *Communal Nude* is, luckily for us, expansive. In “Long Note on New Narrative,” Bob identifies some of the sources for the writing which he and Bruce made, texts and authors that they were obsessed with and in turn

made central to the work they made. They range from the hard theory of Lukàcs to the transgressive extravagance of Bataille, to porn, pop and tv. Appropriately then, *Communal Nude* includes criticism proper: theories of allegory, figures of mythology and religion, politics of crisis and theories of violence. But also reviews of lube, love letters to Ronald Goldman, an epistolary polemic on Kevin Costner’s epic failure *Waterworld*. It gathers writing from the 1970’s, when Bob met Bruce and commenced their collaborative study, and extends to the present, an index for the kinds of permission Bob’s work shares with its readers.

Alongside these wildly various studies, many of the essays in *Communal Nude* are paeans to Bob’s friends, reiterating the crucial stakes of friendship as politics as activism as love in his books. And while, again, almost no writer to my mind has so beautifully celebrated his long and living friendships in art, Glück’s writing about friendships is also marked by the dark fact that many of those he loved are gone. There are elegiac pieces for friends such as Robert Duncan and Kathy Acker, of a different generation or dead too young. But one cannot forget, reading this extraordinary collection, that Glück wrote many of these essays in the 80’s and 90’s in the Bay Area, a time and place where the crisis of AIDS was particularly devastating.²

Each of Glück’s books occupy a specific present tense, all of them fraught: by love so intense it becomes desperate, by sex so good it becomes hopeless, by rage and hope exceeding language and narrative but finding volume in his sentences. Those present tenses are of course now past, and no work of literature gives us total access to what it must have

felt like to have been there; to have seen those things, to have sucked those cocks and grazed those nipples; to have struggled and feared and wept and screamed with that laughter and those pleasures. And yet to read these works now, it is remarkable how now they feel. It’s obvious that the world hasn’t changed enough; it is still so great and miserable. That is, its misery is as great as its greatness. Decades after they first appeared, the fundamental transgressiveness of his work is powerfully disruptive: these texts are as alarming, provocative, and rich as I imagine they felt when Bob wrote them.

Communal Nude begins with the “Long Note on New Narrative.” The greatness of this essay is that it is able in twenty pages or so to be the cake and the eating of it: literary theory, biographia literaria, gossip, scandal, comedy, tragedy. In other words, it is not only a theory of New Narrative but New Narrative in practice. It begins with Bob meeting Bruce in the early 1970’s. He describes this meeting in terms that feel awfully familiar, for those of us who have stayed up all night in the Tenderloin, drinking cheap whiskey, unable to turn away from a magnificent new life unfolding in front of them. I quote it in full:

Bruce had his eye on the future, a catastrophic upheaval he predicted with a certain grandeur, but it was my own present he helped me find. I read and wrote to invoke what seemed impossible--relation itself--in order to take part in a world that ceaselessly makes itself up, to ‘wake up’ to the world, to recognize the world, to be convinced that the world exists, to take revenge on the world for not existing.

Bob’s celebration of Bruce here is another instance in his

writing where the friend is praised for their greatness. Like his theory of Acker’s greatness, this homage conflates greatness in art and greatness of heart. It’s exactly the kind of greatness that Bob’s writing celebrates but also embodies, it is a greatness that we are permitted to rub up against with our flesh. His books, and his friendship, help us find our own present tense, wherever and whenever that is. Once we’re there, everything tastes better, more vivid, a peach over a sink—our studies, our findings, our vengeances, our convictions. Our then, our now, our future.

Thanks to Rob Halpern and Jocelyn Saidenberg for their generous comments on this essay in draft.

Poet, fiction writer, editor, and New Narrative theorist **Robert Glück** has served as director of San Francisco State’s Poetry Center, co-director of the Small Press Traffic Literary Center, and editor for Lapis Press and the literary journal *Narrativity*. He lives in San Francisco and is a Professor of Creative Writing at San Francisco State University.

Brandon Brown’s most recent books are *The Good Life* (Big Lucks) and *Top 40* (Roof). He is a co-editor at Krupskaya and occasionally publishes small materials under the imprint OMG! He has lived in the Bay Area since 1998.

1-I heard a delicious piece of gossip while writing this homage that Bob says the best title of all is *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*.

2-Once, over a dinner of marrow bones and smoked chicken wings, Bob told me about some negative review of Margery Kempe in *Publishers Weekly*. Mystified that there could be a negative review of such a masterpiece, I scoffed. Bob reminded me, gently, “Well, Brandon, many of my readers were dead by then.”

Free Omnidawn Poetry Readings

Berl's Poetry Bookshop, 141 Front St., Brooklyn
Thursday, November 3, 7-10 PM

Molly Bendall
Elena Karina Byrne
Jennifer S. Cheng

Norma Cole
Jackie Craven
Rebecca Gaydos

Angela Hume
Robert Andrew Perez
Keith Waldrop

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 4, 6-9 PM



Sara Deniz
Akant



Andrea
Baker



Molly
Bendall



Elena Karina
Byrne



Jennifer S.
Cheng



Ewa
Chrusciel



Norma
Cole



Gillian
Conoley



Jackie
Craven



Rebecca
Gaydos



Angela
Hume



Myung Mi
Kim



Paul
Legault



Robert
Andrew Perez



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Piccinnini



Bin
Ramke



Brian
Teare



Daniel
Tiffany



Keith
Waldrop



Rosmarie
Waldrop



John
Wilkinson

For additional info visit: www.omnidawn.com/events



Quiet in both worlds,
 or boisterous in ours
 and placid in the heavens,
 or mad in the heavens
 and here everything smothered
 by the husks the terrified in spirit
 pulling inward shed,
 or ours enchanting
 and theirs shivering near a reality
 that would undo what we've gained
 if we confronted it—
 some say we should—
 or theirs wet and ours slick below it,
 or theirs hard and ours crushed
 beneath its weight
 and somehow heated by it,
 or theirs where the sick wait
 and ours the dead,
 or theirs the dead and ours the sick—
 the vitally sick—the sick about
 to leap from bed (with eyes
 that won't rest in stretched sockets)
 to mutter a name whose significance
 is known only to them,
 or theirs high and following the links
 in a chain that will do what all chains do—
 come around to connect to itself
 or else lead to its anchor in a cement pylon
 by the edge of the field that our world is,
 and ours the ankle, wrist, or throat
 encircled as in the first possible configuration
 of the chain all registration of the visible instantiates,
 or theirs its loosening, and ours its snapping,
 or theirs its groaning when stretched in revolt,
 and ours its slackening when a slave or convict
 collapses, and all is realized, here and there,
 the perfect exchange fear ministrates,
 there the financial instrument, here the dust,
 there the wand, here the torn and shredded sapling,
 there the king, here the horns
 rotting on the wall from a plume of smoke and stink
 that never abates, they have an underworld,
 we have an antechamber, or we have an underworld,
 they have a gyroscopic sun-chamber
 whose heart's a crystal gymnasium where angels watch
 the red hearts of those rare heroic souls elevated to its reward
 keep time with ancient processes
 or make the ancient processes that gave form to all things
 remember themselves in this fresh improvisatory beating,
 and if we are to be present at the end of everything
 they need us to bear witness
 though we prefer to be witnessed,
 to be heard but not listen to a mother
 (and all who later stood for her)
 and to know she watched
 when to test her absolute devotion
 you let yourself tumble into
 the repulsive cavity of the night.



"Bed," 9" x 12" watercolor on paper, 2014

Matt Longabucco is the author of the chapbooks *The Sober Day* (DoubleCross Press, 2016) and *Everybody Suffers: The Selected Poems of Juan García Madero* (O'Clock Press, 2014). Other work has appeared recently in *Prelude*, *Haunt*, and *The Brooklyn Rail*. He is a co-founder of Wendy's Subway, an independent library and meeting space for writers, artists, and readers. He teaches at New York University and Bard College, and lives in Brooklyn.

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A journal of art, literature, and culture

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Dearest Annie, You Wanted a Report on Berkson's Class: Letters from Frances LeFevre to Anne Waldman

Edited by Lisa Birman with an Introduction by Bill Berkson and an afterword by Anne Waldman. Cover art: Joe Brainard Hanging Loose Press, 2015
Review by Lisa Jarnot

In the midst of an American election season that brings the image of the cold demanding bitch lady to the fore, it's a pleasure to go behind the scenes with strong women of the poetry world. *Dearest Annie* documents a fascinating moment in West Village bohemia and the New York School, but it also gives a great view into the work that women do in a man's world. Twenty years or so ago I first heard tales of Anne Waldman's mother (to think that such a person existed!)—the story went that she had been formidable, harsh, and demanding. It was easy to feel at least slightly terrified of Anne too. The energy was not so much harsh and demanding, but certainly formidable. But then any poet of my generation could tell you that Anne worked tirelessly behind the scenes both at the Naropa Institute and around the Poetry Project to include, support, and nurture young women coming into poetry. That stomping swirling Fast Speaking Woman who glared and glowered over the podium was quick to be a tender ally and confidante. And if she was demanding, asking us to push ourselves as writers, women, and activists, she was also loving—interjecting an “I'm so proud of you” at an appropriate moment.

Dearest Annie gives insight into this overlooked lineage—the support system that women create for each other as they negotiate social, political, and literary systems that are not always entirely welcoming or fair. The collaboration

between mother and daughter is remarkable. While inflected with typical tensions and growing pains, one senses that both parties appreciate the bond. The twenty letters here were sent to Waldman toward the end of her senior year at Bennington College—it's worthwhile to pause and think about receiving multiple weekly missives from one's mother voicing strong opinions about Flaubert, Joyce, Williams, and Ginsberg. LeFevre also sends Waldman detailed notes about Bill Berkson's Spring 1966 poetry workshop at the New School. Waldman (we infer from LeFevre's responses—her letters are not included here, alas) sends poems and college papers and *Angel Hair* magazine hot off the press (begun by Waldman and Lewis Warsh in 1966) for her mother's approval.

With Bill Berkson's recent passing the collection is all the more of a treasure. LeFevre's account of his workshop is comprehensive with insightful and often funny portraits of second generation New York Schoolers Bernadette Mayer, Peter Schjeldahl, and Michael Brownstein. It also is detailed enough to reconstruct a full semester's syllabus and class assignments (LeFevre's own contributions of poetry to the workshop are included at the back of the book). Her fondness for Berkson shines through, as does her pride in being a star student: “BB said he likes my “new” things very much.” (91)

What's also clear throughout the book is the rich culture the LeFevre–Waldman family dipped into from their abode on MacDougal Street. One can picture the fifty-five year old LeFevre buzzing around the city to collect facts for herself and her daughter about Merce Cunningham performances, a Marianne Moore reading at NYU and the new acquisitions at Ted Wilentz's Eighth Street

Bookshop. The demands LeFevre places on Waldman revolve around her own experiences and disappointments with men, marriage, and creative life:

I was exactly like you in feeling I had to be “in love” in order to do my best work, but my own experience taught me that this is a supreme feminine fallacy... Men don't feel this way, not if they are truly creative. They keep love in its place and put their art first. Love is fine, and all that, but don't let it be a trap for your gifts. (87)

What is salient is the desire to help and collaborate. LeFevre sees her notes on the Berkson workshop as a service: “now you can catch up with what I'm learning and I hope it may be useful to you” (37), dutifully clips newspaper articles: “Since you're in the magazine business you may find this piece on *The Harvard Advocate* interesting,” and offers financial support: “I think I've told you vaguely that I've been putting some money away slowly for the last several years so I'd have something to help you study further when you finished Bennington, or get started in the theatre.” (79)

Of course Frances LeFevre was formidable and demanding. But the story that should have been passed down to me twenty years ago (and now has been thanks to Lisa Birman's great editing work) is that Frances LeFevre was a poet, translator, and culture worker who, by the way, also ran a household, raised children, and elbowed her way into a world that sometimes probably didn't know what to make of her.

Lisa Jarnot is a gardener, homeschooling mom, and poet.

Nevermind Robert Fitterman

Wonder, 2016
Review by Michael Gottlieb

What is this huge book? And

it is huge. 712 pages huge, not counting the front matter, of which there is really rather little. A title, a copyright page, a half-title, a blank or two, and then we are off. And then, three words on a page, six words, one word. One line, perhaps two lines.

What Robert Fitterman has done here is quite simple: he listened to the entire hugely popular and vitally foundational Nirvana album ‘Nevermind,’ which was released in 1991 and includes ‘Smells Like Teen Spirit,’ and wrote down every word in the album, as he heard, or misheard, it. That is the whole book.

As one engages this book, naturally it is within the context of Conceptualism, since Fitterman is associated with that writing tendency. And, as an instance of Conceptualism, as an iteration of the larger Conceptualist project, this book can be identified as holding a position on what we could call the pure-to-impure Conceptualism spectrum. Since the manipulation, or transference, or assignment ‘work’ that led from the music to the printed page was clearly not completely process- or procedure-driven, and since intellectual, personal, decision-making played a very clear and key role throughout the book's composition, *Nevermind* occupies a place on the ‘impure’ side of that spectrum. The import of that spectrum, as well as how widespread is this kind of repackaging of language, in fact so widespread that the term Conceptualism, some say, may come to fall out of use, are topics unto themselves, but not ones there's space to focus on now.

Similarly, the physical impact of this book, the sheer weight of it, how you must accommodate yourself to it as you read—holding it on your lap, with one or two hands, perhaps setting it

on the table— is another worthy topic of further exploration, particularly in the light of other Conceptualist projects of similar scale.

Likewise, the book is engaged in the longstanding question or conversation about repurposing. That is to say, what does it mean when the poet takes some material, often some sacred or precious text, in an activity that long predates Conceptualism, and uses it for her or his own purposes?

There are additional questions which arise in the reader's mind regarding choices the author has made when it comes to how many words there are on a page (very few) and how and when and why line breaks appear (there are usually no more than two or three words on a line). Since this book was created via an aleatory exercise what was behind those compositional choices? Do they represent some base-level poeticizing impulse, long-bred into his writing-subconscious, that somehow translated what he

heard, the music and the lyrics, into 'poetic form' all on its own, somehow?

All of these are good and worthy questions, questions which this book forthrightly obliges the reader to consider. But another question, a different question arises, a question which eventually shoulders aside all the others... How is it that a work like this, a piece of Conceptualism pure or impure, whose workings and procedures lie so clearly on the surface, how can it be that such a transactional exercise, as cool and operational as any in the Conceptualist inventory, has the ability, the power, to transport the reader, to pick one up and take her to another place, to fling her into a world of raging, heartfelt, aching? A place of unutterable, gleaming ecstasy and coruscating, plunging, jealousy? Loathing followed by adoration followed by a hard-won, preternatural amity, fleeting and fragile?

All of these unalloyed, unadulterated, overpowering

emotions, so many emotions, they crash upon the reader pell mell; is it that Fitterman has mined the essence of Kurt Cobain? Perhaps. Perhaps Fitterman has just uncovered it or perhaps he has done something else: perhaps his functional exercise, that sitting and listening and transposing, summoned up something out of thin air, somehow that exercise worked some transmutation upon those words and empowered them in this way. But perhaps it doesn't really matter, because we are left with a work of art of surpassing, effortless power and affect.

What is sitting on our desks is a more than 700 page book that demands to be read in one sitting. What the reader has, what one is left with, is a very powerful work of art that picks you up and transports you. It takes us on a rushing, dashing tour of dread and hope and supernal, beaming love. It carries us, without any volition on your part, turning the pages requires the barest effort, across jarring, fearful landscapes, into

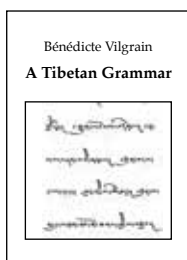
very dark places and back into the light.

In the end it sets one down, like all great work does, but not in the same place you started. You are not the same. The world does not look the same. How you or I think about that music is not the same. And, how we think about Conceptualism is not the same either. This is not cool and dry. This is as transporting, as wrenching, as excruciating and elevating as any other kind of poetry that similarly succeeds upon its own terms.

Michael Gottlieb is the author of nineteen books including *I Had Every Intention*, *Dear All*, and *Memoir And Essay*. A number of his works have been adopted for the stage, including *The Dust*, which was staged by Fiona Templeton and company at the Poetry Project at St. Marks on the tenth anniversary of 9/11. His latest, *What We Do: Essays for Poets* has just been published by Chax.

—

Burning Deck Books



Bénédicte Vilgrain: *A Tibetan Grammar*

[translated from the French by Keith Waldrop]

"A project which explores language from an almost architectural perspective, using the structure of Tibetan to examine how a language creates categories—and then immediately overflows them.... Vilgrain deftly demonstrates the inability of language to remain sufficiently static for any cartographical system. Her balance of analytic query, sharp imagery, and radical juxtaposition creates a varied and vivid surface that gives the reader an uncanny sense of experiencing the familiar through foreign means."—Cole Swensen

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Lissa McLaughlin: *Quit*

Taut lines—fragments from a journal? a report on hospice work?—seem to keep moving out of our grasp while at the same time bringing us closer to their subject, the elusive experience of the dying and their nurses. A grief worker at a hospice ponders how ordinary human failings—jealousy, fear, rigidity, the hunger of loneliness—can overwhelm rewarding work. To the point of envying the dead for leaving it all behind. And yet how anything, even a lousy sandwich, can recall us to the pleasures of this world.

"Life and death is daily but never rendered mundane, and the poems turn quickly from rushed observance to elegy to report, often in the same breath... Even the smallest moment can become urgent, and the poems articulate that urgency."—Rob McLennan *Blog*

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Michael Donhauser: *Of Things*

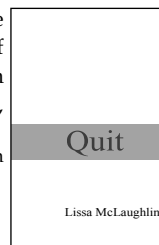
[translated from the German by Andrew Joron and Nick Hoff]

A thicket, a manure pile, a marigold, gravel, a tomato, a cypress — award-winning Austrian poet Donhauser engages in a "close reading" of natural things. His emphasis is not so much on observation and depiction as on tracing the movement from object to language. His approach is multilayered, bringing a dazzling variety of perspectives to his deeply felt encounters with nonhuman phenomena.

"Donhauser, like Ponge, intends a poetic by which the reader is implicated in the genesis of his or her world. To make us 'aristocratic auditors of our steps.' 'Though also fitted with a mute attentiveness. / (A sensibility that listens more than interprets.)' —John Olson, "In the Thick of Things," *Tillalala Blogspot*

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Age of Reasons: Uncollected Poems 1969-1982

Ted Greenwald

Edited by Miles Champion
Wesleyan, 2016

Review by Rachel Levitsky

When I started reading *Age of Reasons* in order to write this review I got to page 2 and went to the park to record myself reading “Show and Tell” for a love who has no special love for cryptic avant-garde works in language. But I knew that the poem would speak to her. Before reading the poem this is what I said to this love, extemporaneously:

it doesn't make sense / the poetry
i like
what i'm going to read you makes
sense
what i'm trying to say is what
makes sense
about the poetry i like is that they
[sic] always have
a certain kind of affect that can't
be contained in
an explanation of itself... and what
i like about ted
is that the affect is the same
whether it
makes sense or not

Much later in my reading of *Age of Reasons* I came upon this from Greenwald:

...I don't know
If this makes sense It
Moves me over

These final two and a half lines from “Out of Thin Air” (85) reference the two and a half lines that come just in front of them:

A window buzzes and
Sizzles gossiping with
Night...

I don't know either, if the fact of a window gossiping with night makes sense. The expression of wonder over whether it makes sense; then throwing off the question for a statement of surety, the assertion that this poetry, free from one kind of sense, does something; it moves me over (the ‘me’ being the poet, moved by his own strange combinations). Furthermore, and this is critical to Greenwald's success as a poet, it achieves and invites the recognition of that thing— not

sense— that has the capacity to move others over in a shared feeling of this thing. I want to clarify that this thing, this being moved over, is distinct from (and disagreeing with) an oft-repeated defense of difficult or avant-garde work or, in Greenwald's context, LANGUAGE criticism, that obscure writing works because of the interpretation performed by the singular reader while reading, individually, idiosyncratically.

As a volume, *Age of Reasons* shows Greenwald's poems assert a potential for a common experience of being turned over whether their sense is apparent or not. Slippage between meaning on the surface and meaning through feeling manifests both in poems and striking prose pieces. Notably the prose takes up more than a third of the book. I could call these prose poems and they are but they are also longer or shorter arguments or kaddishes. Each realized by a different formal gesture: “The Sandwich Islands” works like a score in which the first and last line is an operation of sound that ‘sandwiches’ the disassembly of a particular social ‘island’ by cause of that operation of sound:

The sound makes them
stop You put them
away for future reference
You put them off and feel how
pissed off they are they can't help
themselves
You take them for a
ride Bob and Patty meet them
for dinner The
sound makes them stop (46)

The prosed contain inverted short stories, impossible suicides, gender switches, dreams, regrets, dirges. These gestures are too in the verse poems, but in the prose they are decidedly more descriptive and defining, inarguable, especially when they don't fully make “sense”:

It is this osmosis of contrariness that lifts the spirit very much in the same way a heel does a shoe, ever so slightly and hardly noticeable. It's on this particular membrane the drama of frailties carries its latent despair to the

point of nationality (82)

I confess that here, between “osmosis of contrariness” and the “latent despair to the point of nationality” I began to write “jewish” in my marginalia, not for the first time. The other was when I read the line “the beauties”— something my own Jewish mother would say and does. Jewishness is one of the aspects of the work that coheres beyond grasp, a mournfulness told through uncomfortable closeness, humor and wry but not sarcastic speech.

Greenwald's vernacular invades the forbidden realms of the sentimental (one poem is called “I Love You”), the snide (ridiculous quoted speech) and the cheesy (obvious puns: “waiting spoon” / “a found objection”), and subverts them into areas that are pleasurable, playful, deep.

Yes, deep. Here's the last thing I said to my love before finally shutting up and reading her that wonderful poem:

and also
what i like about ted
is that almost
every poem
is a love poem.

Rachel Levitsky's last book was *The Story of My Accident is Ours* (Futurepoem, 2013). She is a member and was a founder of the Belladonna* Collaborative.

The City Keeps: Selected and New Poems 1966-2014

John Godfrey

Wave Books, 2016

Review by Jess Mynes

John Godfrey's *The City Keeps: Selected and New Poems 1966-2014* published by Wave Books spans 13 collections and includes new work. While selected poem collections are often problematic because the selected poems are displaced from the resonances they had within their original manuscripts, Godfrey's poems resist losing any of their original verve because of their stubborn peculiarity, continual

formal invention, and unerring logic. This selected collection remains as vital as when *Music of the Curbs* was held together by three staples.

Godfrey notes the evolutions in his body of work when he writes, “...my writing... went through “genetic drifts.” After retirement, without the same unpredictable and social daily life, I found my work to take, after a while, a “genetic leap.” *The City Keeps* elucidates the continuum of these drifts and leaps. The saturated, margin-to-margin poems from *Push the Mule* sound like a Tarot reading, “You might blindly inherit perceptions at the behest of a graceless clean angel. Lift the corner of a grave you honor and search there for a tooth that fits your rations like a key.” (117) Whereas the stride changes in the meticulous, read-between-the-lines, spare poems from *Private Lemonade*, “I am lost and distracted / You have all the right ideas / I try to be whole.” (156) These shifts read as both logical furtherance and radical break when one is able to examine them within the context of a lifetime of work.

If New York City is the sum total of the people who live there, the city itself is its own psychology. Godfrey writes, “My career as an HIV/AIDS Registered Nurse Clinician was, on a daily basis, unpredictable, heavy on drama, and full of wonderful persons I would not otherwise have been able ever to know, and know quite well, in such a segregated city as New York. I have chosen ways to make a living that immersed me in New York City, my love for which is exceeded only slightly by my love of poetry.” Why wouldn't Godfrey rewrite “The New Colossus,”

Give me your runaways / your
felon priests / and your mothers
/ who spit at their own peril / I
will hold up this light / fed by
their pluck and fight / I will hum
through my cigarette / the anthem
they compose? (81)

The city inhabits Godfrey as much as he inhabits the city, “The glitter of pavement in

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SOME CORRECTED TILT OR
SOME RIGHTED SOMETHING
GONE UNDER, THE POEMS
AN EVAPORATIVE TRACK LEFT
IN ITS WAKE."

—NATHANIEL MACKEY,
author of *Nod House*

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THE WORK-SHY

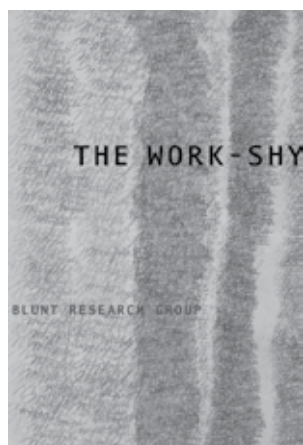
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AN ARCHEOLOGY OF
INHUMANITY THAT SHOULD
HAUNT US FOREVER."

—MIKE DAVIS, author
of *City of Quartz*



These projects are sponsored in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.

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my brainstem..." (57) or, "this headache, this heart / and the city to which / it is glued with affliction." (60) The poet and the city are inseparable permeable layers. When the vestiges of day-to-day activity are peeled away, the streets look sickly,

Without refuse around / the street looks bony / the second it fleshes out/paper glides and particles / tsk on fenders. (191)

Squalor is natural, even intimate, an intimacy that sees things for what they are and resists romanticism, "Cold falls like dust from/holes in unseen stars/the bridge that looks / like a rainbow to you / is a wet crosswalk." (260)

The poems in *The City Keeps* are streetwise songs of experience filled with stoicism, "Don't be so moved by everything / that belongs to the city"(102), benevolence, "Blame our kisses but not ourselves, afford / us disdain by sheer compass of stride" (54), and benediction, "Everything in the world urges the snow to sparkle where it fell." (94) The narratives of these songs contain a logic that sustains but can also collapse beneath the weight of its own artifice,

...I've quieted so / much of my heart in bars / the last decade, as if to/balance the intensities that/ radiated throughout, from/shared beds and stubborn assertions. (59)

City life requires patience and measure, "Easy on the Mahler, I tell myself, or you'll wear out the tire pump."(77) To be witness is to bear the weight of resentment inherent in reflection, "It is all introspection and the discovery of flaws, and I am punishing you because in opening my heart I find myself punishing myself." (66) The city streets catalog the passage of time,

One of those days / you begin to cherish / the landmark / you see so easily / By the window / memorabilia / the woman the cat / Roil with transience / which incontrovertibly / stagnates, its fossil / the overlapping frets. (215)

If, "Thinking is not grief enough" (119) and, "The only thing that can break my courage is memory." (124) time and wisdom offer little solace because, "Knowledge isn't / a meaningful word / but as a bubble / it will do." (219) Living is an uncompromising act of vigilance, "And you can see how easily this ideal replaces the gladiators" (68), where idealism is chipped away, "I shed little bits / of chivalry." (201) A shared, flawed collection of lives that defies simplifying or broad brush strokes and finds its meaning and measure in the nuances of our complicated lives, "It was complicated, this kind of joy." (65) We more than survive, we embody our striving, "The tip of the broken wing / is my eyebrow." (96)

"A puff is all I can hold" (88) but Godfrey holds more than that, he holds us to the truth of keeping us honest about how the uncertainty of our lives is both beautiful and unrelenting. Each detail in these poems is recorded with an exact reckless measure because, "Despite my efforts life is if anything bigger than ever. (82) *The City Keeps* is a seminal collection of poems.

Jess Mynes is the author of several books, including *One Anthem* (Pressed Wafer) and *Sky Brightly Picked* (Skysill Press). His poems have appeared in: *The Brooklyn Rail*, *The Nation*, *Bright Pink Mosquito*, *Vlak*, *Shampoo*, *Big Bell*, and various other publications. He is the editor of Fewer & Further Press where he publishes innovative contemporary poetry.

Power Ballads
Garrett Caples
Wave Books (2016)
Review by *Dia Felix*

"Keep Riding"

I would like to recommend this book highly if you like poetry or if you're just interested in trying it out. Thank you for reading the first sentence of my review in this fine

supplication. The anxiety of writing to a puglickation regarding a person you admire or a person whose work you admire is real and don't try to diagnose it, if poetry is to a person a necessarily transient, incomplete, inherently vaporous, temporal mystical arena of transvital communications. Dead poets are alive. Describe in detail the song you heard. I Let It Go, like a Disney platform or a once-leading man who can't care anymore and lets his gut blossom into another country, or like the fat fairies of Phoenicia New York who enjoy a repast on the terrace most of all. Love is a rose and you'd better not. How cool scholars can speak coolly about the lives of the saints. Good luck everyone. Hello, poet. Hello, comrade. Behold, a face.

We are now where / We are nowhere / Wear nowhere / Wear Him Hero / We walk / down all the stairs / to the melty street / where it's like being punched / tightly / by steam in the heart of / your throat, / if you can remember that / Felt like getting a tattoo and / in the best thing that's ever happened in / all history of the world / my girl was waiting for me on the Venice Boardwalk, / looking at the sea. / So you see / I saw her back / the younger Bob Dylan crouches behind a stalk, / being cute

Caples, in what I receive as direct address pitched to a

mentor who is now gone, writes in "Ten Ten Line Poems for Philip Lamantia":
i don't remember who
i was before we met
and now that you're
gone where am i?
somewhere else
where there's no
one like you and
the me i used to
be is equally
dead

Caples by his own admission is not a voluminous writer of poetry. More of a prose man you could say. He holds a PhD in English from UC Berkeley, and has edited major recent collections of poets Frank Lima and Philip Lamantia, projects which exemplify personal devotion and deep scholarship. Then he edits the Spotlight Poetry Series at City Lights. It makes sense then that he would embrace some procedural techniques, Oulipian challenges or personal puzzles to tune into an interior frequency. And he'd be good at that. But we don't stop there, can't stop won't stop. Whether or not you're interested in notions of proficiency with regards to poetry (I'd say I'm not) you have to be impressed with the virtuosity that's happening here. It's an It's A Small World style tour of poetic possibilities— a spirited gust through expansive genres and character tongues, through rhythms and story hours. Sincere and humorous,

perky and gloomy, this book, like the pop songs it references, is a gesture of togetherness, and at the same time a singular solo. The moments which are tricky are especially delighting, like watching breakdancing. He writes, "America the Poem":
welcome to the all-white meet and greet, a nuclear overreaction to our plastic propaganda. i read on tv we live in the world's most fortunate cookie, a complex apartment in an apartment complex... please swipe yourself before you leave.

The scary scares but amuses. The jazz is hip, the pop is popping. The earnest notes, like the song for Suzanne, which closes the book— a song of redemptive love which starts at nothing and moves to everything— arresting:

*i've been a native californian's
blueprint for better orange juice /
a single strand of bullion thread in
the slipknot of a hangman's noose
/ a metaphysical punching bag for
the ladies ski-team from belarus
/ i haven't been her lover; i have
been, not*

In "oakland," the poet writes, "i miss it like / a horny lover & i haven't even / yet left" You have to imagine he's thinking of leaving to move in with Suzanne.

*Love is a phone / who glows when
it knows / you're alone / Love is as
certain and silly as the sky / under
which two nieces sprint with sandy*

*bottoms / towards the indifferent
shore / Love is wait in the car /
because you're the star. / Love is
a bug bite i hope that's a bug bite
/ Love is the subway in the heat
of the blank / Love is i'm waiting
for you / i chose an international
place / so we'd all be equally
uncomfortable / Poems i wrote for
you when i was supposed to be
reviewing your book well / i went
to the Serra sculpture at the new
SFMOMA / and was compelled
to touch it with my tongue / how
expensive / did you ever think /
the pristine bubble-textured walls /
of BART / would stir the chimes of
your heart and tip you nostalgic?
/ Did you ever think you'd get a
rental car and getting in the rental
car think, / god i love this feeling
of a rental car / it's a kind of dope
/ and if poetry is a kind of money /
then every mile that i drive a poet
/ is a kind of retirement plan / i'm
happy to do it, i have a rental car
/ it's just so great / to not have to
have low expectations anymore for
a second / And i know it's kind of a
bratty bratfest / but what can i say?
i'm kind of bi / do you jump / when
a bedbug catches you above the /
elbow / only to find / it wasn't, / it
was only sweat / do you too love a
rental car at dusk / do you walk up
five flights and / relish going slower
and slower / thinking that you might
never make it / oh hey everybody
did you hear / that daydreaming is
now / a sign of depression?*

True or false: to the attuned, California is always new. And yet final, as in, the terminal battlefield of man against nature. The strollers are coming! We fought until our backs were to the sea we

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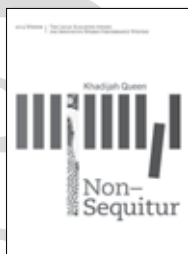
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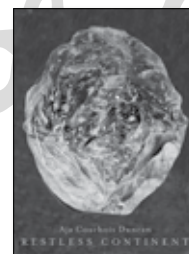


RESTLESS CONTINENT

Aja Couchois Duncan

"The first thing to grow isn't always pretty," writes Aja Couchois Duncan, but the teeth of survival go for exquisite jugulars in this debut collection: images of oceans below our skins, deserts swimming in desire, and always, always, a vast and frightening hunger. These poems hiss with life, the sharp edge of alphabets that won't be tamed. My heart almost can't bear such precision; Duncan's split tongue pierces the page. Such gratitude is a stunning gift. —Deborah A. Miranda

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smoked some verde and then we floated away. Grab your favorite couple books and let's hit the road— he's made us a mixtape for the end of the world. By erasure, by blacklight. By procedure or bloodsplash. Power Ballad, Power Salad. Whatever arrows you might need to dip you dip we dip, please do Write On, American Idol Garrett Caples.

Dia Felix is the author of the Lambda-nominated experimental novel *Nochita* and she lives in New York.

Community letter

Poem

Sitting indoors to write poetry
for yourself and posterity
is as unhealthy as it ever was.
I should get out and do something practical
I tell myself, like curry favor with the gods.
I will go to the all-purpose neighborhood shrine
and offer shredded wheat to Health-Conscious Demeter,
shredded poems to Neo-Conceptual Apollo,
and the shreds of youthful passion to Distant Aphrodite
for her invisible scrapbook.

But there is no suitable offering
— except perhaps shredded leases? —
for the propitiation of Tribecan Zeus, guardian protector
of insatiable real estate enrichment, in support of which
he hurls surreptitious bolts of lightning
from his penthouse on Mount Olympus Corp
toward impecunious ne'er-do-wells
in downmarket targets below,

in one of which I recollect his gentle cousin,
Garden Zeus, who spent his tranquil days and nights upstate
unseen, for the most part, in support of flowering vines,
giving civilized focus to anonymous rustic air.

This issue's community letter is a poem from Tony Towle. **Tony Towle** first read at the Project in 1968, and is a former Newsletter editor. His most recent book is *Winter Journey*, from Hanging Loose Press.

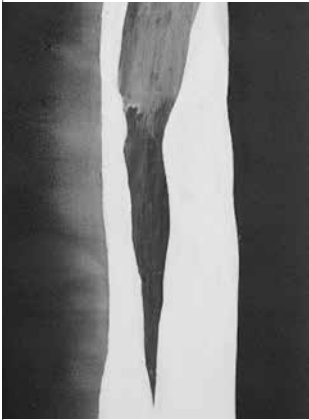
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Tell Me Every Anchor Every Arrow




by **Steffi Drewes**

"Precious few poets go so
undaunted by the extravagant
plastic possibilities of syntax..."
— **Brian Teare**

2016, 86 pages \$16.95

PREMONITION



by **Etel Adnan**

"There is always
a conductive thread
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H	U	M	A	N	I	T	Y	R	U	F	C	C	W	W
S	U	O	I	C	E	R	P	E	T	O	V	H	O	E
P	E	A	C	E	F	U	L	G	N	E	P	O	R	E
C	O	U	N	T	L	E	S	S	E	M	U	O	R	P
S	E	S	U	F	E	R	O	K	L	B	T	S	O	I
S	H	O	T	E	L	L	U	B	Z	A	R	I	S	G
E	M	D	I	S	A	P	P	E	A	R	I	N	G	N
L	R	F	A	T	U	O	U	S	F	R	D	G	D	O
T	I	A	I	Y	L	O	H	C	N	A	L	E	M	M
I	G	O	M	O	D	E	R	O	B	S	J	Z	V	I
M	N	O	I	T	C	A	E	R	O	S	B	D	A	N
I	I	E	U	R	H	C	I	T	O	X	I	U	Q	I
L	Y	Z	E	A	L	G	P	R	O	M	I	S	E	O
L	D	S	E	E	T	H	I	N	G	W	A	R	S	U
T	C	I	L	F	N	O	C	N	R	I	F	T	S	S

weep
promise
fury
sorrow
dying
refuses
putrid
quixotic
fatuous
ignominious
bullet

nightmare
fear
limitless
rifts
seething
choosing
conflict
wars
countless
humanity
precious

disappearing
peaceful
vote
melancholy
embarrass
zeal
consolation
boredom
shot
puke
reaction



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