

Bush Writes Back

BY GREG FUCHS

Two Saturdays ago I opened my mailbox at the studio to find a letter from the White House. That just cracked me up.

Finally, President Bush responds to the letter I wrote to him in October 2002. Enclosed with the letter was a card that read,

'Our war on terrorism continues,' the president wrote me, making my letter to him all the more relevant.

"Due to mail screening procedures, we have only recently received your letter. We appreciate your patience in awaiting this response."

Several technical mistakes arose because he received the letter more than six months after it was mailed. For instance, the President opens by thanking me for my letter about Operation Iraqi Freedom. At the time I wrote the letter we were discussing the viability of an unnamed operation of preemptive strikes against Iraq. Unfortunately, that is a long gone debate by the summer of 2003, and the reasons for preemption have not even been proven. But now it is pretty much a given that we will fight wherever the President deems necessary.

This week as many as 2,000 United States troops could be sent to Liberia to monitor the ceasefire agreement in the West African nation, including President Bush's request that President Charles Taylor step down. "Our war on terrorism continues," Bush wrote me, making my letter to him all the more relevant.

I wrote to the President last October on the eve of a massive antiwar demonstration. Among many points that I presented, the most salient was that it has been well documented that during more than 50 years of military intervention we have not once instigated a grassroots democracy; not in any country since 1945 in China through the 1980s in Latin America to last year in Afghanistan. Yet, hundreds of thousands (perhaps millions) of humans have died. I asked that he consider the requests to explore nonviolent alternatives to conflict resolution made by the citizens who gathered in Washington.

Unfortunately, the President has yet to employ alternatives to military intervention. He has the audacity to write, "... we will help to build a government of, by, and for the Iraqi people." Ironically, his allusion to the Constitution came just a week before Bush was scheduled to appear at the dedication of the new National Constitution Center in Philadelphia. Thankfully, 5,000 people gathered to protest, march, and rally to stop United States' wars at home and abroad. They are requesting the end to colonialism, empire, endless wars, occupation of Iraq, and the Patriot Act; and privatization of education, veterans, and welfare benefits. Most importantly, they ask for money for human needs, not the Pentagon war machine.

Once again I expect to hear the critics, especially the sympathetic ones, say that the demonstrators' requests are too broad. I counter that if the neo-liberal policies did not completely demolish all programs of, by, and for the people, then the requests would not seem so vast.

Finally, the President closed by writing, "Laura and I join our military families and countless others in praying that all who serve return home safely and soon." A graphic artist friend used the following slogan for a banner while working for ACT UP: "Lord protect me from those that worship you."



Elaine, Prince Street, SoHo, New York City 2003.

Greg Fuchs photo

Eating Well on a Lousy-but-Steady Income

BY NANCY SEEWALD

I am willing to make certain sacrifices in order to enjoy the occasional nice meal out in New York. There was the infamous SpaghettiOs phase, which not only saved me tons of money, but actually inspired sympathy and selflessness in the hearts of my friends, who took to tossing me their leftovers from time to time. The SpaghettiOs phase wasn't nearly as bad as it sounds, as I opted for the \$2.29/can Annie's brand with soy meatballs, and not the Franco-American version, which I could have bought at less than half the price.

Cooking, of course, is the more obvious option, but what to do when your kitchen is a shoebox? Besides, whipping up a big meal for just yourself can be depressing, and even expensive, after buying all the ingredients. And if you suspect you may not be able to commit to that meal, which required a trip to the grocery store for god's sake, then for the next several days that meal will begin to rot, possibly necessitating the disposal of not only the food, but the dish you stored it in, too.

Leftovers are the key to eating well and cheaply, but, unfortunately, heaping portions tend to be limited to Chinese take-out, and though that in itself isn't a bad thing, it can get almost as monotonous as a course of SpaghettiOs. I was very excited, therefore, when I ordered my meal at **Mama's Food Shop** (200 E.3rd St., 212-777-4425) and witnessed the most obscene display of generosity this side of a Texas truck stop.

Mama's is an East Village institution, although almost everyone I asked, despite having heard of the place, had

never been there. For \$8 you get a choice of meatloaf; grilled, fried, or roasted chicken; or grilled salmon, all of which come with one side item. For an extra buck you get another side, but if you want yet another, and they are tempting, you'll have to shell out \$3 per order. Vegetarians can choose three sides for \$8.

Admittedly, my grilled chicken was a little bit dry and bland, and I regretted not going for the meat loaf (which a couple to my right said was delicious) but I couldn't help but fall in love with this place. The mashed potatoes were flavored with spices

and flecks of cheese, the cauliflower drizzled with parsley and dill, the macaroni and cheese was crispy and fresh, and the green beans were sautéed in a garlicky concoction.

The customers were notably cheery and friendly, so happy to be eating food that was cheap and delicious. Eat slowly and then pack up your food in a to-go container—I was able to get three additional meals from my leftovers. For dessert, Mama's always has a bread pudding and cobbler on hand, also doled out in huge portions, and I was pleased to learn that the bread pudding, chocolate and banana that night, actually tasted great the next day after I heated it up in the oven.

Mama's lets you bring your own alcohol, and, in case your food gets cold, there's a microwave in the dining room, which, though small, is filled with picnic style tables that you can share with strangers. Remember to bus your table, or you will be chastised.

Far from breaking the bank,

Mama's can actually be an integral part of a tight budget. But what to do when you want wait service and something a

Nick Piombino

Upper West Side

1978. Or is it 1979. It seems to matter much less than before. Now, there are certainly people I'd like to get back to right away, assuming you will read this. When I would really bring in Mallarmé, or Valéry, saying "they really want some prose," or, accepting you would read this for case interest, something that would interest you ... what is that ringing out there, I wonder, and that banging. I remember writing about that in another book, but that part never got into the later work. The individual, worthwhile, little by little, drains his consciousness into words. But no one wants to hear that banging, outside, inside, does it belong there.

Mallarmé , Valéry, what is the cause? In 1892 Freud wrote "Both hysteria and linguistic usage draw their material from a common source."

Please see SEEWALD page 6

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EDIT

Welcome back, your dreams are your ticket out. Or something like that. Here's Boog City, the East Village community newspaper, reborn.

We're proud to welcome aboard Jim Behrle as our new poetry editor. Jim's been a fixture on the poetry scene for a long time, editing canwehaveourballback.com, assisting with Boston's Pressed Wafer Press, and organizing various festivals in the Boston area.

A hearty thank you to Arielle Greenberg for gathering all of the 1977/1978 themed work for this issue. I first became aware of Arielle when I was living in Albany, N.Y. in the early nineties, and I stumbled on her zine, *William Wants a Doll*, a

great pop culture amalgam on bands and boys. For years I tried to track her down and always failed.

Then, one day, on the SUNY-Buffalo poetics list, there was a post from an Arielle Greenberg in Syracuse asking for information on things to do in Buffalo. This couldn't be her, could it?

So I emailed her, gave her the name of someone she could contact in Buffalo who could clue her in, and then asked if she was indeed that same Arielle Greenberg.

The next day her email reached me. "It's so nice when I'm trapped up here in language poetry hell to have somebody who remembers my zine."

And thus began our correspondence, friendship, collaboration. If there was ever a perfect fit to edit an issue focusing on these years, it's Arielle.

We have our relaunch party coming up shortly, where we'll be covering the music of Elvis Costello (see the ad on page 7). In lieu of more editorial, I thought I'd include a piece of mine in which Elvis is featured.

Perhaps the pit is about trust.

It's trust that I value above all. My huge Elvis Costello poster hangs down on me, his wayfarers staring onto my forehead, into my eyes, the word TRUST emanating out of his head like some sort of life code, a message for me to live by.

An ex cheated on me beneath this poster (though she tells me it didn't happen here, there's no reason to believe her). And since then, it's trust that I lack.

There's almost no one, except my parents and brother and sister, who inspires trust in me. A couple of friends, my two best ones, sure, but even then, there ain't no blood.

And I stay on the edge of the pit, thinking it's more than trust that I'm lacking. Perhaps it's my tendency to think instead of do. I wonder "why the pit" and stand on the outside, commonsensing it out of any possible equation that I could figure into, thinking myself out of it.

Instead, looking for a stoop, coffee, and some newsprint to soften the blows.

This previously appeared in Slack

Letters to the Editor:

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The East Village

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Acme

Alt 137

alt.coffee

Angelica's Herbs

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Supercore Cafe

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Kelly's Writers House

The Khyber

LaTazza

Arielle Greenberg

Chicago

Punk, Politics, and Poly: A Tribute to the Year of the X-Ray Spex

"Nineteen seventy-seven, and we are going mad! Nineteen seventy-seven and we've seen too many ads! Nineteen seventy-seven and we're gonna show you all: apathy's a drag." So goes "Plastic Bag," by one of the smartest, most original and most political of the early punk stars. And no, it was not Tom Verlaine or Joe Strummer or another skinny guy with a cool hairdo, but a biracial teenaged girl with braces: Poly Styrene (née Marion Elliot), leader of the one-album British phenomenon the X-Ray Spex.

Photos of her performances are incredible: a short,

pudgy girl with spiraling hair in a WWII helmet and checkout-clerk uniform screeching her heart out, backed up by a 16-year-old sax (!) player named Lora Logic. And no other band has so fiercely opposed the mainstream culture.

On *Germ Free Adolescents*, which was released in 1978, Poly takes on consumerism, exploitation, racism, aging, conformity, and other complex issues—brazenly political work marked by brilliant concision and, most unusually, a potent sense of humor. "Chain store, chain smoke: I consume you all!" Styrene shrieks in one song. In others, she seamlessly incorporated advertising jingles into her anti-materialist lyrics, agit-prop style.

Unlike the other groups who played London's Roxy in 1977, Styrene was far more interested in changing the world than destroying it. Apathy's a drag, and Poly paved the way for the legions of activist straight-edge punks who would follow. By the time punk caught up to her, she was living as a Hare Krishna. Hardcore.

I first heard Poly's song "Warrior in Woolworth's" not in 1977, when it was first performed (I was only five that year), but in 1991, my first year of college. There was a girl in my dorm with wild black

curls that matched Poly's own and a great collection of homemade mix tapes: she introduced me to the X-Ray Spex. That same year, another new friend showed me my first underground comix, and, in one issue of the wonderful *Love & Rockets*, the lead characters jubilantly sing X-Ray Spex lyrics at a party—synchronicity.

It was a wonderful welcome into the world of punk at a time when that world was exploding with Nirvana, Sonic Youth, Bikini Kill, and zines. There was great community-building and excitement for the possibilities punk might hold.

I imagine that 1977 might have felt similar for punks back then: a reckless entry into an unknown world, unifying and divisive and silly and important all at once. Today we have Britney Spears in shredded leather hot pants singing "Hit me, baby, one more time." In 1977 it was Poly Styrene in shapeless day-glo pronouncing, "Oh bondage up yours!"

Nineteen seventy seven, dear reader: that, I claim, was the Modern World. In this issue of *Boog City*, dedicated to the year of Star Wars, Annie Hall, the Carter peace accords and draft dodger pardons, disco and punk, a host of writers imagine, reexamine, and reflect on it. I hope you enjoy.

Sarah Manguso Clinton Hill **Love Is a Narrative Impulse**

In the beginning I am tottering around Boston in the mid '70s, pasting things together.
In the beginning self-knowledge is not crucial.
E. steals my heartmobile,
M. cries when someone takes away his pretty leaf.
Construction paper is everywhere
and when it is replaced by panic I do not notice.
When it is suggested I write a dictionary,
I come up with one entry:
Bike—something you ride.
I don't remember wanting a bike
as brutally as I remember wanting gum.
Warhol swore he survived solely on candy and cake.
The relative worth of objects is clear to me.
I have to write a report on glass.
I like the way calendars hurricane open in old movies.
I develop a crippling stage fright
between the audition and the first rehearsal.
Jean Cocteau, asked what he would save
if his house were on fire, replied the fire.
Because everything said in assembly is true
I save a feather from a great horned owl for 18 years.
When the pizza sign gets fixed I miss the flicker.
I really have practiced dancing with a broom.
I think I can measure everything.
Here I am, armed with a sextant
and a handful of plastic rulers. The first time
I see my friend smoke we are sitting in a field.
Asleep in the teepee I miss out
on my final night of vigilance.
No one in our whole photography class
does the assignment called Sky Meets Ground.
The best building in New York City
is the downtown municipal building with the angel.
When I laugh my grandmother says
You have the same face flying through.
Luminiferous ether—there was no such thing!
I listen to the first live recording of "Yesterday"
and wonder what made the girls scream there,
and there, and there.

C. S. Giscombe University Park, PA **A Letter About 1977**

Dear Arielle—1977? I lived in Syracuse and saw Rocky fight Carl Weathers at the multiplex at Shoppingtown, glorious lost cause, and Travolta outdanced the competition's dark campaign at the theatre at the Fayetteville Mall. Saw economic recovery in *The Marriage of Maria Braun*, this at the Manlius Cinema, and turned, saying—having to—"kindly shut the fuck up" to the man complaining about Hanna Schygulla's black lover. (The E! website drops the lie on memory—this was 1978 and only feels like it was 1977, that memory thing that carries right on over from one to the next, that pours across the border. No name for the black actor anywhere on the web.) But saw Duane Jones dominate *Night of the Living Dead* downtown at the Civic Center's Halloween Movie Marathon, truly 1977, the film having come out nine years previous, having earned a rep but for other stuff than Duane Jones. Faux nostalgia then and nowadays for the whitest zombie cannibals in us all; faux nostalgic paeans to white hopes on the dance stage and in the cinematic ring. But at the Civic Center, the ambiguity of blackness went riding to the center of the screen, for once, a repeat and revise on Lowell's "to choose life and die": when he shoots the white zombies to death, he does not go all stiff. Made near Greensburg, PA in 1968, Arielle, not 1977, but seen by yours truly for the first time in 1977 in Syracuse, your town and my town.—C.



Edwin Torres the East Village **Feel Up At the Mosh Pit: Lovey Dovey's a Ramoney**

fabric - is the only thing
separating everything
ripe - round rear slams
up against the joey scram
joey - screams numbers' joy
gnoshing oceans moshing
motions - of frenzy frictions
of tanktop tension - to get lost in
crammed - up close in
nowhere to go but -

legs(but)legs boom/booty(licked)legs like/legs?/
leg/heights(match) crotch(match) booty(natch)urally
(perfect)match(patch) asspad(latch tite)RIGHT

power/missile launch/pad powerup/andGO!

two-four-six-coat
encore - encore
who do we appreciate
encore - on - every
speed metal RUSH
was a ticket for a PUSH
inna PUSH issa PUSH
baby never lost TOUCH
repetition had a boner
baby never lost STRIDE
THREE-four-TWO-four
TWO-six-THREE-six
SIX-six-NINE-nine
ONE-one...GO:

once we become we be
once we be fun
we become watta bum
was once he be dumb
watta dumb ditty humpback
slacked inna frontpack
wracked by the comeback
some neva see

THREE-two-ONE-two!
ONE-three-TWO-go!
after an hour of two-minute songs...

wassa time for removal
wassa flacid ending
wassa innocent gaze
wassa i dunno you
wassa Si of people, wassa
great concert huh?
what? oh yeah, great

Melissa Anderson

Park Slope

Monster Dearest

Joan Crawford died at the age of 72 on May 10, 1977—15 days before the release of *Star Wars*. That the death of one of Old Hollywood's most prominent stars coincided almost exactly with the birth of a new kind of cinema—one in which special effects supplanted the glory of the human face—is quite significant. Crawford had retired from making films after starring in 1970's *Trog*, a low-budget horror film in which she plays Dr.

Brockton, an anthropologist who attempts to tame a troglodyte. Many consider it an ignominious end to her career; Crawford herself once said, "If I weren't a Christian Scientist and I saw *Trog* advertised on a marquee across the street, I think I'd contemplate suicide." But *Trog* has a great deal to tell us about Crawford's career as a star—and about her career as a mother.

Dr. Brockton lures *Trog* out of his cave and studies him in her own research center to provide "an opportunity to lift the veil from the past." Studying Crawford in *Trog* allows a similar opportunity: to contemplate the monstrousness of stardom. *Trog* is, in many ways, Crawford's analogue. "Remember we're dealing with a backward child—surely we can teach him by example," Dr. Brockton pleads to her colleagues. Joan Crawford, née Lucille LeSueur, endured the pedagogical rigor of MGM—elocution lessons, fittings, diets—which transformed a former laundress and Broadway hoofer into the elegant titular star of 1932's *Letty Lynton*. "*Trog* has had more than his share of hysteria and brutal mistreatment," a sympathetic Dr. Brockton notes. If only someone had extended such compassion to Joan after she was labeled "box-office poison" by a movie-industry trade paper and kicked out of MGM by Louis B. Mayer in 1943.

Significantly, Dr. Brockton is a mother. Her daughter, Anne (played by Kim Braden), dutifully assists her in teaching *Trog*. "That's right, Anne darling. Never show fear—only trust," gently exhorts Dr. Brockton as her daughter feeds the creature. Crawford had famously played a mother in 1945's *Mildred Pierce*, the film that marked her comeback. The mother-daughter relationship between Dr. Brockton and Anne is much more benign than the one between Mildred and Veda (Ann Blyth), who are caught in a sadomasochistic bind. Social-climber Veda is condescending, manipulative, and venal; self-abnegating, working-class Mildred both detests and passionately reveres her daughter for these qualities. "Get out, Veda, before I kill you," Mildred orders toward the end of the film—a command that reveals her monstrous rage. In 1978, less than a year after her death, Crawford's daughter Christina wrote the tell-all book *Mommie Dearest*, perhaps the most infamous account of a monstrous mother. The 1981 film of the book featured Faye Dunaway as Crawford, rendering her as a creature far more horrific than a troglodyte. Dunaway's ghastly caricature ensured the vilification of Crawford's stardom—in a year that would see the release of *Raiders of the Lost Ark*.

1977/1

Burn the



Sean Cole

Arlington, MA

A Quick Trip Through the '70s Via Internet

www.1973.com is actually a website called megago.com, a search engine listing 144 categories alphabetically: adult, bankruptcy, charity, DSL, exercise, family, free xxx, et cetera. On the top, bottom, and right hand side are margins listing even more categories, all lit in different colors, a circus of information. When you arrive at this site—on purpose or accidentally by, say, typing in www.1973.com—it will not stop offering you free games and e-mail in a small black box in the upper left hand corner. Megago will ask you if you want megago to be your homepage. Megago is everything and everywhere, or at least it is nearly every year of the 1970s. www.1974.com will land you at the same site. As will 1976.com. (1975.com will land you at a site that says the domain name 1975.com is for sale—an idea that, when I was 4 years old in 1975, would have stunned the average parishioner.) 1977.com will take you to megago.com. 1978.com bears the legend "looking for the 'Ubid.com' auction? Register now! Head to head bidding wars go now!" 1979.com? Megago.com. They say a decade doesn't culturally end until 5 years into the next decade. Think of how you dressed in the early '80s. Then, know that 1980.com will take you to megago.com. [1981](http://1981.com) is megago. As is [1982](http://1982.com) and [1983](http://1983.com). 1984.com will pull up the website of 1984 productions "design, development, events." (Do not pass "megago." Do not get sent to Room 101.) Their logo is an enormous syringe. 1985.com will bring you to "Willy's Gourmet Paradise." 1986.com, the site that marks the first cultural year of the 1990.coms, will bring you to megago. 1987.com is "search guide," a non-descript site, but for the young white woman crouched in the upper left hand corner, that is what it says. 1988.com does not exist, is not owned by anyone, not even by megago, not even by someone offering to sell it for the highest bid. Ditto 1989.com. 1990.com is megago.com. 1991.com does not exist. 1992.com is tictetips.com. 1993.com, the dot-com I graduated from college.com, does not exist. 1994.com is megago. 1995.com will take you to a site that reads "this site has not yet been developed, try searching the internet on these popular categories." 1996.com is the site of the Landover Baptist Church, or landoverbaptist.org. 1997.com is its own search engine, with its own name, 1997.com. 1998.com is nothing, it has no soul, nor face, nor name, it is not even megago, it cannot be displayed.

Maile Chapman

Turku, Finland

A Social Life

There were many people staying in what seemed to be a typical suburban house. It was a split-level ranch. I didn't think the arrangement was permanent, though the number of people seemed to increase. Many were men, but not all; I was sleeping in the master bedroom with several other women, my age and younger. The master bedroom was furnished with heavy oak furniture, the kind found in any furniture showroom in any strip mall. There was a massive bed with a heavy dark frame and a detailed headboard, maybe it had shelves and compartments with sliding doors, or vanity mirrors, and maybe there was coke or maybe amphetamines hidden in the compartments. It may have been a waterbed with a geometric-patterned bedspread, it had that look, but probably it was not, though I am not sure, so who knows. There were cosmetics, lotions, products everywhere, standing upright on every surface. And suitcases, and clothing? The sounds of drawers opening and closing? Everyone looked extremely well put-together, despite the conditions. At least four or five of us slept in that large bed. Where the men slept is not clear, but certainly they were staying in the house as well. There was not really enough space to accommodate everyone. It was all possibly as it would be found during a project, with models or actresses or dancers, and technicians, photographers, artistic directors, financial backers. It had that sense of preparation, though the spectacle did not seem imminent. For my way of thinking, the location should have been either an older house or a newer house—but again I am relatively sure that it was a suburban split-level, not more than twenty or thirty years old, painted dark yellow on the exterior and furnished entirely as you would imagine, by normal people.

There would easily be men, adult men in their forties, standing in or walking through the master bedroom. They were dressed with a slight formality—slacks and jackets, or sweaters. They were not very aware of, or not very interested in, the many female things piled around in that room, like open suitcases or open drawers perhaps exposing bras and panties. Nor were they present to sexualize the women, not particularly. Conversation, even in the bedroom, was simply conversation, which often seemed to pertain to the larger project. People would be sitting on the bed. People would sit back against the pillows. None of the women seemed to feel awkward about this public quality of the bedroom, that every room was as public as any other. A person might easily leave a prescription medication in one of the bathrooms, or any other personal thing, and it would not be strange. That I did not know which damp towel belonged to whom or where all of the others were sleeping seemed more a factor of the good-natured overpopulation of the house than of anything else. If I wanted to, I could borrow anything; if I wanted to I could go into any room and speak to anyone. I don't remember specifically if there was drinking but I'm sure there was, in the afternoons and evenings, and I'm sure there were cigarettes and probably some were smoking joints mixed up with rolling tobacco, everyone very casual. People in one room might hear very clearly the sounds of someone using a hairdryer in the next room just prior to joining them. The toilets were always flushing. Everyone was present, not seemingly pointedly aware, not pausing as I do when I am awake: they were living a fluid life, a populated life, a simple, social life.

e memory



Brenda Lijima

Liz Brown

Park Slope

A Fused Affricate

Articulators: lips, tongue, teeth, alveolar ridge, hard palate, soft palate (also called the velum).

Articulation of the affricate: [f] as in cheer, [dz] as in jeer. The airstream is stopped in the vocal tract, then released into a narrow passage formed by two articulators approximating but not touching each other. This creates a turbulent sound called frication.

*

The speech teacher's office wasn't in a classroom. The school had run out of space, and her office was a trailer in the parking lot with palings and chicken wire around the base. Frances mounted the movable wooden staircase covered with Astroturf that led to the door, which made a sucking noise whenever Miss Grattus opened or closed it.

Speech teacher. That's what Frances said. Speak teaker. That's what other people heard.

"Swallow with your tongue against the roof of your mouth," Miss Grattus said.

Frances touched her tongue to the ridge behind her teeth. Miss Grattus said she had a fused affricate. Speech. Beach. China. Jell-O. It sounded like she had a wad of Scotch tape inside her mouth. Scotch.

They sat this way on Tuesdays, watching the workings of the other's throat, tongue, and lips. Miss Grattus smiled at Frances's efforts, nodded, and turned to the tape player on the desk.

Frances looked at the drawings of oversized mouths in vowel formation—the lips constricted, the lips parted, the lips pursed. Miss Grattus kept the trailer neat. Christmas cards slipped between the Venetian blinds were the only sign of her life. Frances imagined a motor revving, the trailer breaking loose from its chicken wire and sticks with the two of them inside, suddenly rolling free.

The speech teacher clicked a cassette into place. "I want you to listen closely to the lady on the tape and repeat what she says."

Frances swallowed, ready to oblige. She said, "I want to sound like a lady coming down a staircase."

Miss Grattus was going to press the play button, but she waited.

*

A fused affricate is not a defect but a quirk. It does not impede speech. It does not prevent joining the debate team, being elected to student council, playing "I Never," or going to a good four-year college on the East Coast. ("Back East," they say in Chico, the affricate Frances dreads most. "Where are you from?" people ask, incredulous, "Kiko?" It is easier to say she comes from Northern California. Or a town north of Sacramento. Or even from San Francisco—she was born there.) A fused affricate does not prevent operating cash registers, word-processing programs, multiple-line phone systems, or web browsers. It does not prevent dry humping, drinking games, road trips, or bachelorette parties.

But if it could..., And if it had....

*

The door sucked shut behind Frances, and she looked up to the window with the blinds down and the backs of Miss Grattus's Christmas cards pressed against the glass. It was May now and the ink had faded, but Frances could see that her teacher's friends had wished her joy in the new year, happy holidays, and lots of love.

*

A lady coming down a staircase has good lines. Vertical: the lines of her gown, the lines of her long arms, the lines of her bare throat. And where the silk rises to her breast—that is the horizon line.

The staircase could be the one in *All About Eve*, but the lady is not Bette Davis. It could be the one in *Harriet Craig*, but the lady is not Joan Crawford.

There are curves, too. The staircase curves, widening when it reaches the ground. The lady's hand curves over the banister. Her lips are not lines—they are mass and volume and curve.

But a seven-year-old girl descending the wooden steps from a trailer in a school parking lot...knees, elbows, jawbone.... A seven-year-old girl is only angles.

Christopher Kennedy

Syracuse, NY

Music of the Spheres

The List of Possible Thirds

For a while, I had the distinct impression I was Jesus Christ. Not an uncommon occurrence in my neighborhood after the white mescaline made its rounds. I set about to convert the nonbelievers, but all I could find were other Christs. I knew them by their given names as they knew me by mine, but we were all convinced of our divinity. There was nothing to do except form a committee. We met twice a week to discuss theology and smoke hash oil. A few friends sought me out. They were two

and needed one. They made a list of possible thirds. When the phone rang, I thought it was the doctor, returning my call. Are you hearing things? they asked. Are you seeing things? I had heard Gregorian chants. I had seen ants crawl in and out of my mouth, carrying crumbs to their queen. I lied and said no. A few months later, I was talking with another friend who told me about the list, their plan to form a trinity. There were several names, but mine was at the top. Apparently, had I been honest, the three of us would have ushered in the end of the world. This was in '77, right about the time I was getting into punk.

Hamelin

I found a stick on my way to the boathouse. A handsome stick torn from the branches of a red maple and rid of all its annoying leaves. I took it home and dressed it in my daughter's doll clothes. I especially liked its little red cap. It slept in my bed with me and never snored. We lived this way for a few weeks, until my neighbor made an inappropriate remark. I

stripped the stick of its clothes and sharpened it with a steak knife. Now it was a weapon, and I plunged it deep into my neighbor's heart. I pulled it out, dripping with neighbor blood, and wiped it off. I brought it inside and carved out its middle. I poked some holes in it and sanded its mouth down to a reed-like opening. I played a song on my new flute to celebrate my recent victory. I walked to the edge of town, followed by all the filthiest vermin, and became a legend. That's the part people remember.

The Half-Blue House

As if the house had fallen asleep, the family inside a dream. In one of the bedrooms, The Fugs sang "Wet Dreams Over You." An animal corpse decomposed in the basement like melting snow. The machines all had wheels, and there were many machines. The father knew about them, but he sat all day at the dining room table, smoking unfiltered cigarettes. His t-shirt was dingy yellow under the arms. The two sons owned several guns and a bow and arrow set. Toward the end of

the dream, the older son went to prison as an accomplice to murder. The younger son drowned in the reservoir at sixteen. He had recently learned how to play the drums. There was a great deal of sex going on in there, but not the kind you would ever tell anyone about. The neighbors agreed it was a shame the older son's girlfriend was pregnant. The fetus trembled whenever her potential mother cried. The visits to the prison were bitter rehearsals for later failures of communication. He served five years of the sentence and moved back to the half-blue house. His mother had a beard and resembled a cocker spaniel. Dog hair wafted across the floor beneath her feet and seemed to carry her along, not exactly ghostly, from room to room, slightly above the floor. The father died. The mother's hands were stained yellow from nicotine. She had recently taken a job as the Avon Lady. The animal corpse was a cocker spaniel, the family pet. The grass had not been mowed for nearly a decade. The house was also half-gray as if someone gave up after painting the house half-blue.

Chelsey Minnis
Littleton, CO
Shearling

1977/1978

remember the amalgamation



.....realize.....
.....that I pull on the 6 inch thick shearling coat.....
.....and nuzzle it.....
.....and I rub the soft collar.....against my neck.....
.....and.....only give you air kisses.....
.....and realize.....
.....that the curls of the shearling coat.....graze my cheek and share.....
.....a muskiness.....with the sunkissed edge.....of my jawline.....
.....and the centred plunge.....
.....of the growling shearling collar down my.....
.....frontal.....axis.....
.....reveals.....
.....my goldusted.....heartwrenching.....tawny.....and.....
.....realize.....I let.....
.....the ruffles of real fur.....slip.....off.....
.....one bare shoulder blade.....
.....and I only give you.....lovely blank looks.....
.....and realize I cinch.....
.....the soft belt.....tighter.....
.....and I force.....
.....my hands down into the deep.....
pockets.....and squeeze the luscious loneliness.....whenever I think of you.....

SEEWALD from page 1

bit more upscale? The East Village, despite certain lamentable transformations over the past decade, is still a haven for affordable dining. The problem often is finding a table, or good ambiance, as many of the ubiquitous cafes lining avenues A and B are crowded and noisy, filled with people chattering away on cell phones, while faux-alternative music blasts through the sound systems.

Strolling up B on an unseasonably hot evening, I discovered **26 Seats** (168 Avenue B, 212-677-4787), a little French-American place with one crucial attribute—an air conditioner.

26 Seats reminded me of a restaurant I ate at in Vezelay, a ridiculously adorable medieval town in France. It took its food seriously, but it didn't encourage excessive lounging and smoking, the way some Parisian-style cafes around town do. The patrons at **26 Seats** were a little older than the typical East Village crowd, and most appeared to be on dates.

For about \$40 per person, you can order an appetizer, entrée, dessert, and one glass of house wine. The menu offers a French onion soup and a soup du jour, which in this case was a thick and flavorful (read: no salt needed) butternut squash.

My friend ordered the onion tart, which came with a well-dressed salad, and could easily be a meal unto itself. Although the crust was neither too thick nor too rich, with all of those caramelized onions, onion tarts are often best split with another person.

I was not very adventurous in my entrée selection, opting for the grilled chicken in a balsamic sauce, which arrived with a side of potato terrine, layered with cheese and resting atop a bed of steamed spinach. My friend ordered the striped bass, which was cooked to Cape Cod standards, but it was insufficiently bathed in its champagne sauce. Her exciting side dish was cornbread pudding, which was unusual and extremely tasty.

Each entrée comes with its own unique side, as well as a green vegetable, which gives the meal a sense of completeness and justifies every cent spent. Vegetarians can order the pasta du jour, which is listed on the menu, or a vegetable plate, which is not advertised, but is an option nonetheless.

Though barely capable of contemplating another course, my strong work ethic prevailed, and I ordered the tarte tatin, which was not too sweet, with just a bit of caramelized apple around the edges. The dessert special, an ice cream cake with pralines and chocolate drenched in raspberry coulis, was a disappointment: it tasted artificial and possibly prepackaged. Other desserts included chocolate pudding and crème brûlée, the latter served in a soup bowl and bubbling over with crispy crème.

The meal totaled about \$80 plus tip, but that included two glasses of wine per person, and I took home about half of my chicken. The bill could have been dramatically reduced had we shared an appetizer and dessert, and for those who are on a super tight budget but don't want to eat another meal at the Sidewalk Cafe, a simple soup and salad combo would have sated my appetite just fine.

And when the classy meal is through, you can roll right next door to the Lakeside Lounge and compensate for the splurge with \$1.95 cans of Milwaukee's Best.

Coming up next: where to get a table on the weekends? Where is there free bar food? Old Devil Moon vs. Mama's? BYOB?

BOOG CITY

12th Anniversary Party

**Thursday August 7,
6:00 p.m.**

ACA Galleries

**529 W.20th St., 5th Flr.
(bet. 10th and 11th avenues)**

hosted by **BOOG CITY** editor David Kirschenbaum
For further information
call 212-842-BOOG (2664) • editor@boogcity.com

Firmat Book Relaunches Open 24 Hours

Another Strange Island
Mariana Ruiz Firmat
Open 24 Hours #13
acoldobot@hotmail.com

Another Strange Island, by Mariana Ruiz Firmat, is the first chapbook published by Greg Fuchs and John Coletti under the imprint Open 24 Hours. The new editors continue the work begun by Baltimore poet Chris Toll in the early '80s. Toll and friends designed the covers,

Location is important in this book. But it's shifty. Where do we locate identity? Gender? Sex? Culture? Our history? Is it really behind us?

supplied the work, and, over the course of several years, raised eyebrows and readerly interest before passing the editorial mantle down to poet Buck Downs.

Through each editorial shift, aspects of Open 24 Hours have remained the same, while accommodating subtle changes. Coletti and Fuchs were inspired by a Steve Carey chapbook, 20 Poems, published by Alice Notley in the early '80s. They liked the mimeographed '60s style—Open 24 Hours is printed on 8.5" x 11" sheets of paper and triple-stapled, with covers featuring original artwork by friends—the manageability of 20 poems on 20 pages and how this has been a model for their separate yet similar approaches to poetry. They decided to carry on this tradition.

"We want to publish our friends who we feel are either underpublished or sort of forgotten right now," said Fuchs. "We also want to make a break with some of the sexism of the past generations, so we've decided to publish women friends first." Forthcoming titles include chapbooks by Corina Copp and Betsy Fagin.

Firmat's book is particularly fitting, as it investigates ideas of history, lineage, and memory while evoking several topographies: geography, place, language, culture, gender, memory, and historical and physical experience. Through rich images, spare words, and geographic and gender ambiguity, Firmat deftly shapes a text that suggests and successfully conveys

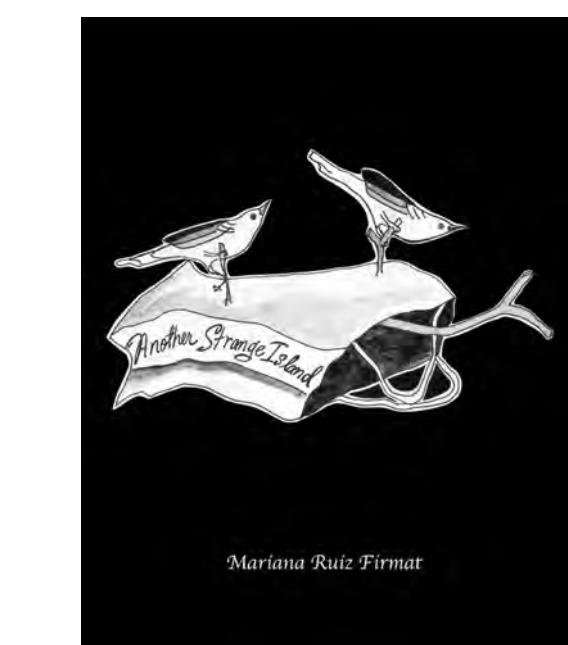
larger ideas and questions of how sense memory might define culture, embodied culture, islanded selves.

The simplicity of the book's construction belies the secret spaces hidden within, or revealed. Firmat, a Cuban-American, moved several years ago from California and now lives in Brooklyn. Location is important in this book. But it's shifty. Where do we locate identity? Gender? Sex? Culture? Our history? Is it really behind us?

The erotic itself is a place, or topography, in this book, indelibly bound with ideas of history, heritage and space. With lines like "the air was heavy / she was bending over me / the center of all cigarette roses / sized to this dimension," Firmat enacts a method for how we might map the various spaces we occupy, often simultaneously, colliding, confounding and infused with specific, sensuous images, scents, and memories.

The poem "Seven In Your House" creates a spare landscape concerned with articulating these collisions, "those six white trees / have nothing / to say / disavowing this silence / as you did 10 years ago."

Throughout the book, islands of self,



Mariana Ruiz Firmat

nation, past, and shifting present(s) coalesce, as Firmat draws lines toward ideas of class, ancestry and location. From "Say It With Flowers,"

I wear a tooth necklace
of said invisible culture
go down to
symbols
a red giant
sleeps

Another Strange Island is a complex and beautiful invitation into Mariana Ruiz Firmat's poetry and an exciting portent of what's to come for Open 24 Hours in its latest incarnation.

—Jane Sprague

My Aim is BOOG

**2 albums
13 acts
26 Elvis Costello Songs**

**CB's 313 Gallery
313 Bowery
Wednesday July 30
8:00 p.m., \$8**

Celebrate the relaunch of **BOOG CITY** as we cover the first two Elvis Costello albums, *My Aim is True* and *This Years Model*, in order, track by track. Before and between the two records there will be readings from the issue's contributors.

With music from the Baby Skins, Merry Fortune, Jim Frazzitta, Pantsuit, Ruth Gordon, Dan Saltzman, Wanda Phipps & Band, Prewar Yardsale, Alan Semerdjian, Steve Shiffman & The Fat Of The Land, the Spunk Lads, the Tet Offensive, and the Trouble Dolls. And readings from Sean Cole, Sarah Manguso, and Edwin Torres.

Hosted by Boog City editor David Kirschenbaum

6 to Bleecker St., F to 2nd Avenue

For further information:

call 212-842-BOOG (2664) or email editor@boogcity.com





AUGUST

LOCATIONS

Brought to you by the
Bowery Poetry Club
and the Poetz Group.

<http://www.bowerypoetry.com>
<http://www.poetz.com>

1	5:00pm	F	(BPC) Lorca Night
2	9:30pm		(BPC) minAsian Collective (\$5)
3	11:00pm		(BPC) Africa First Fridayg
4	3:00pm	Sa	(INPC) re-Verb (\$3 teens/\$5 adults) All-youth open mic.
5	6:00pm	To	(CSC) Ziryab (\$6) Arab-American artists.
6	6:00pm		(WBW) WORD/LIFE (\$5)
7	10:00pm		(BPC) The Beginning
8	8:00pm	M	(CL) Largo Reading Series (free) Featured readers + open mike.
9	7:00pm	To	(BPC) Holes Before Bedtime: (\$10) A new rock musical- part 1.
10	4:00pm		(BPC) OBLIVIO (\$5)
11	6:00pm		(OB) Poet to Poet (\$3 + \$3 min) Featured poets + open mike.
12	7:00pm	To	(CSC) Entertaining Science (\$6)
13	7:00pm	W	(BPC) de la Guarda Castaways (\$5)
14	8:00pm	To	(CL) Largo Reading Series (free) Featured readers + open mike.
15	7:00pm	F	(BPC) Holes Before Bedtime: (\$10) A new rock musical- parts 1 and 2
16	6:00pm		(CSC) Songwriters workshop (\$6) Followed by open mike
17	9:30pm		(BPC) Kareoke+Poetry=Fun X (\$6)
18	7:00pm	W	(BPC) Soft Skull Sneak Peek Reading Series (\$5) Amanda Stern and Matthew Sharpe.
19	9:00pm		(BPC) Holes Before Bedtime: (\$10) A new rock musical- parts 1, 2 and 3
20	10:30pm		(BPC) Afterparty w/ VAZ (free)
21	6:00pm	To	(ACA) Boog City 12th Anniversary Party Poetry + music
22	7:00pm		(BPC) NYC-Urbana Summer Slam League Championship (\$5) Live updates from national championship in Chicago.
23	7:30pm		(Hal) Barrow Street Poetry Journal New issue launch party.
24	10:00pm		(BPC) Farbeon: The Book of Changes (\$5)
25	5:00pm	F	(BPC) Mead Festival Tasting
26	7:00pm		(BPC) Mead Festival
27	10:00pm		(BPC) earthrise
28	2:00pm	Sa	(149) Nomad's Choir (\$3) Open reading
29	4:00pm		(BPC) Akeyla B's Big Poetry Slam (\$5)
30	6:00pm		(CSC) Italian-American writers (\$6)
31	7:30pm		(BPC) Moving Star and Amazing Plaid (\$8)
32	11:00pm		(BPC) Chris Berry & Pangyea (\$10)

10	1:00pm	Su	(BPC) Brooklyn on the Bowery
11	6:00pm		(CSC) 3 Featured Poets (\$6)
12	7:00pm	To	(TFC) Spiral Thought (free) Feature poets + open mike.
13	7:00pm		(BPC) Rough Americana CD Release Party w/ DJ Mutamassik (\$8)
14	7:00pm	To	(BPC) de la Guarda Cast-Aways (\$5)
15	6:00pm		No events scheduled. M
16	7:00pm		(BOB) Acentos (\$5) Featured poet & open reading
17	8:00pm		(BPC) Tilt Brass Band
18	7:00pm		(BR) BBR Reading Series
19	7:00pm		Two Featured Readers
20	10:00pm		(BPC) Dead Meat By Jason Nuzzo
21	6:00pm		(CSC) Russian-American poets (\$6)
22	7:00pm		7:00pm (Church) Brooklyn Poets Circle (\$3)
23	7:30pm		Featured poet & open reading
24	7:30pm		7:30pm (BPC) Shabe Sher (\$5)
25	10:00pm		Persian poetry
26	10:00pm		(BPC) Dead Meat
27	7:00pm		(BPC) NYC-Urbana Welcome Back Party
28	7:30pm		7:30pm (Hal) Wordsmiths
29	7:00pm		(BPC) Dead Meat by Jason Nuzzo
30	7:30pm		7:30pm (LESTM) Noche Multicultural Saneel Mubayi and the Mahina Movement
31	8:30pm		8:30pm (BPC) Party for Coalition for the Homeless
32	9:00pm		James Tracy & The Molotov Mouths Outspoken Word Troupe
33	10:30pm		10:30pm (BPC) The G Spot (\$5)
34	12:00pm	Sa	(BPC) Walking Tour of Poetry Village (\$25 - Lunch/drink included.)
35	3:00pm		3:00pm (NPC) re-Verb (\$3 teens/\$5 adults) All-youth open mic.
36	6:00pm		6:00pm (CSC) Greek-American Writers (\$6)
37	7:30pm		7:30pm (AAWW) (re)collection (\$5) Featured readers + open mike.
38	8:00pm		8:00pm (BPC) Glamour Boys
39	10:30pm		10:30pm (BPC) Failure Night (\$7)
40	10:00am	Su	Po-Mo Vaudeville; afterparty with PECTOPAH.
41	4:00pm		(BPC) Nonsequitur Rehearse
42	6:00pm		(OB) Poet to Poet (\$3 + \$3 min)
43	6:00pm		Featured poets + open mike.
44	7:00pm		(CSC) 3 Featured Poets (\$6)
45	7:00pm		7:00pm (BPC) Dead Meat
46	8:00pm		8:00pm (BPC) A Celebration of the Art, Music, and Film of Brandon Evans (\$10)
47	9:00pm		9:00pm (CC) Chaos Club (free) Open mike.
48	10:00am		(BPC) Nonsequitur Rehearse
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