

The title 'BOOG CITY' is rendered in a stylized, blocky font. The letters 'B', 'O', 'O', and 'G' are in a dark purple color, while 'C', 'I', 'T', and 'Y' are in black. The letters are filled with a white silhouette of a city skyline, including recognizable buildings like the Empire State Building. The background of the title is a light purple gradient.

A COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER FROM A GROUP OF ARTISTS AND WRITERS BASED IN AND AROUND NEW YORK CITY'S EAST VILLAGE

ISSUE 100 FREE

A Little Off the Top The Fearlessness of Flying Guillotine Press



BY FOX FRAZIER-FOLEY

Flying Guillotine Press was founded in New York City by Tony Mancus and Sommer Browning. After finishing poetry school in Tucson, Ariz., both of them wound up living in New York, where, already friends and colleagues, they quickly came to share a literary circle; they admired the work of many of their friends who hadn't published very widely, and began to discuss the idea of forming a small press to help such work find its rightful place in the world. As their conversations about starting a press began to gather momentum, they considered taking their irreverent name from the 1970s cult classic *Master of the Flying Guillotine*; once they settled on that general concept, Sommer reminded Tony of Emily Dickinson's enduring aesthetic maxim: "If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, then I know that is Poetry." Mancus and Browning thought it an apt description of their own mission statement and the kind of work they were hoping to publish, as well as the literary reactions they were hoping to garner. In 2008, they solicited a chapbook manuscript from author Melissa Koozman. As Mancus describes the process: "She said yes, and we went about trying to figure out how to make a book that looked decent and that was hand-constructed. And it was a lot of fun—the design work and trying to pair the writing with a house that suited it. Initially we wanted to try and do books from people who didn't have any full-length collections and for the first couple of years that's how it worked."

In 2009, Flying Guillotine held their first open-reading period; they decided at this point that they didn't want to be restrictive regarding manuscript length; if there was work they loved in the slush pile, they wanted to be able to consider it, regardless of quantity. "And there was—a lot of it," Mancus remembers. "It's hard with open readings, because you get to see a bunch of material that might well be wonderful—but the limitations of time and personhood only allows for the viability of a very small number of things." Curious about Flying Guillotine's selection process when they have a short list of manuscripts they love but can't publish them all, I asked Mancus for some adjectives he might apply to their catalogue at large. What kind of works usually make the cut? What qualities set them apart from the almost-chosen? His delightfully pithy response was, "Hmm, I don't know about this...hard to pin single words to?"

His answer made me laugh, but I felt compelled to press the issue a little: what are a few qualities, I asked, that you think are crucial to creating great art and literature? His answer was both humble and illuminating: "Fearlessness and plasticity, maybe? Or fearfulness and reverry? Trust in skill and process, or distrust of abilities and variation? I think really good work has the ability to punch you in the gut and also get your wires all tangled up. It should challenge us, I think. And that can happen in any number of ways." When reviewing manuscripts for potential publication, he explained, Flying Guillotine gravitates a lot of the time towards work that manages to surprise readers, but also simultaneously to possess a readily discernible core. "The old 'make it new' mantra feels like a sham," he admitted, "but a valid sham. Even though everything has been done already, and before, not everyone has seen everything." He said that Flying Guillotine is most excited by work that doesn't feel like anything else. One example he gave of an author whose work elicits this reaction from him is Seth Landman: "Anything by him . . . his work just kicks me square in the chest."

Open reading periods seem to have been pivotal in the development of Flying Guillotine; Mancus describes his favorite aspect of managing the press as seeing new work from writers he admires, presumably a pleasure whose likelihood and scope are increased by open reading periods. The counterpoint to this—Mancus' least-favorite part of the job—is having to say no to people a lot: an inevitable pitfall of the open reading period, wherein many decent manuscripts must be rejected, no matter the small press reviewing them. When I ask Mancus to identify learning moments that helped him and Browning identify their press's place in the publishing industry, or decide what directions they wanted to grow in, he cites experience associated with holding open reading periods over the years.

"It set our limitations before us in a way that wasn't apparent beforehand," he says. "Being trusted by many people to present their work was both humbling and daunting—it was a huge privilege and also something that weighed on both of us." He explains that he and Browning wanted to be able to present the work they loved and to give it a presence in the world; he describes that task as "a wonderfully thankful job," but one that requires fiscal and temporal "investment in order to keep things moving." As the number of quality submissions increases, so does the catalogue; for example, during their most recent open reading period, Flying Guillotine took on two more titles than they had accepted the previous year, and increased the size of print runs.

And, as the catalogue increases, so do a press's responsibilities. Flying Guillotine's success and growth ultimately left its editors feeling spread a little too thin. "We came in when the small press community was starting to expand," Mancus remembers, "and now there are all of these stellar places that are making beautiful books and working to support them in ways that we couldn't quite ever manage." Ultimately, he says, Flying Guillotine learned that to continue their mission would require adaptation to a changing literary market; as a two-person operation, with its editors living in separate cities, the press couldn't continue running as it had since its inception.

Thus, Flying Guillotine Press is currently on hiatus; their website describes this break as lasting "until further notice." The hiatus is both an attempt to allow Mancus and Browning to "be reasonable adultish humans who are tied into the locations where we live" and a way of honoring the work they've already taken on. Their plans for the coming year include eventually putting Flying Guillotine's existing catalogue online, to give the books a more permanent home in the literary cybersphere. "Right now, it's indefinite," Mancus soys of their pause, "but that doesn't mean it's infinite."

<http://www.flyingguillotinepress.com/>

Tony Mancus (<http://www.thrushpoetryjournal.com/may-2013-tony-mancus.html>) currently works as a technical writer. With Sommer Browning, he started Flying Guillotine Press in 2008. He is the author of a number of chapbooks, most recently *City Country* (Seattle Review) and *Again(st) Membering* (Horse Less Press). He lives with his wife Shannon and their two yappy cats in Rosslyn, Va.

Fox Frazier-Foley (<http://lunalunamag.com/2014/07/07/18632/>) is the author of two prize-winning collections of poetry, *Exodus in X Minor* (Sundress Publications) and *The Hydromantic Histories* (Bright Hill Press). She is currently editing an anthology of critical writing about aesthetics titled *Among Margins* (Ricochet Editions), and an anthology of contemporary American political poetry titled *Political Punch* (Sundress Publications). Fox writes poetry horoscopes for *Luna Luna* magazine and is Editor-Curator of *The Poetry Blog's Intoxicated Corner*. She loves tattoos, gin fizzes, her husband, and her dogs.

What's Luck Got to Do With It: Vision, Risk, and Collaboration at Noemi Press



BY LAUREN NEEFFE

Boog City writer Lauren Neeffe discusses the importance of collaboration, innovation, and risk-taking with Noemi Press Publisher Carmen Giménez Smith and Managing Editor Sarah Gzemski. **Boog City: I wondered if you might give a brief history of Noemi Press.**

Carmen Giménez Smith: I started Noemi Press in 2002 as a way of making handmade books by people I liked. Evan and I became more ambitious with the press in 2004 and did several chapbooks a year, including fiction works. We liked making the books by hand and thinking about form/content questions even then. In about 2007, we had two kids and the hand-making process wasn't doable. We also saw that digital printing had come a long way, and so at that point we decided to make our move toward publishing full-length books. We had an open call and were fortunate enough to receive a manuscript from Claire Hero, a visionary book called *Sing, Mongrel*. That was the first full-length book Evan ever designed, and we were thrilled that people were going to get to read that great work. We had a few more open calls, then decided to move into a contest model. We felt like we would get a much wider range of books to consider (which we have). Francisco Aragon proposed a Latino series with us in 2010, and we debuted with Sandy Florian's *Boxing the Compass*. I always had *Infidel* in mind, even in the very early days of the press, but I think I was waiting for the press to have more traction to kick it off. Sarah [Vap] sent me a collection of essays, but *The End of the Sentimental Journey* resonated the most with Krystal Languell (EIC at the time), Sarah, and me, so we decided to make it the first volume of the series.

In retrospect it has all been great luck. I asked Rosa Alcalá for a translation, and we were fortunate enough to publish *Lila Zemborain*. When we were still working on the chapbooks, I was a complete Jenny Boully fan girl, and I wrote to her, and we did a book with her. In this way, it's very quixotic, many of the books we come to publish. I choose very few books for the press because the vision of our editorial staff is stunning; I'm leaving it to them.

You're new to Noemi, Sarah. How is managing at a small press different? And what feels "small" about Noemi?

Sarah Gzemski: There's a greater sense of responsibility, which isn't to say that I didn't take my lit mag work seriously—I very much did—but many of our authors are publishing their first books with Noemi, and the weight of that is something I feel all the time. I want to do my best work to make sure their book makes it into the world on time and in all its glory, because to not do so feels like a disservice to work that I respect and admire so much.

As far as the "small" aspect, there are a couple of things we identify. For me, it's the fact that we can take more risks in what we publish and that we run on very little money for no profit, really. We try to produce as many books as we can and have an all-volunteer staff.

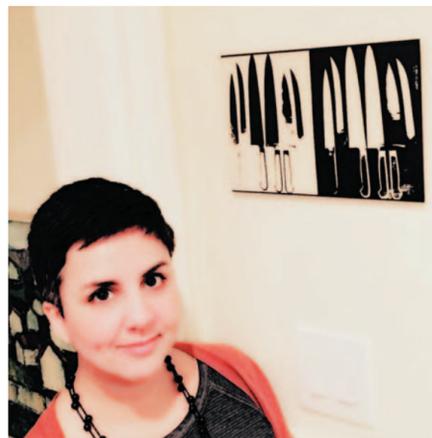
Of course. Running a business on no money is inherently risky, but it opens the opportunity for artistic risks. Can you give an example or two of some risks you've recently taken or of risks you anticipate in the coming year?

CGS: Jeffrey Pethybridge's book was a risk for us. It was a book with strong design elements that Evan Lavender-Smith, co-founder and editor [of Noemi], managed admirably. We're excited about our *Infidel Poetics* series, which we hope functions as a corollary to contemporary poetics discourse by publishing shorter, more formally innovative approaches to poetics. That series, which began with Sarah Vap's *The End of the Sentimental Journey*, will feature Douglas Kearney, Roberto Tejada, and Arielle Greenberg.

I also don't think we have a narrow aesthetic preoccupation. Since so many disparate voices edit Noemi, we don't fit into a box.

Yes, I wanted to ask you about your design process. Your books are beautiful and smart in their design. Who designs them? How much say do the writers have in the design? Did JP come to you with ideas? Were the risky elements coming from him?

CGS: We work with a lot of amazing designers: Steve Halle, Ed Ortega, Jana Vucovic, Douglas Kearney (who'll be designing all our *Infidel* titles), and Evan, who doesn't design for us very often but who definitely set a design vision for us as a press. Our design doesn't cohere like some presses because we do let authors participate in the conversation about design, but it's a collaboration. Sometimes because of cost (permissions, say) or format, we can't do what some authors want, but we do try to meet them as far as we can.



Noemi Press Publisher Carmen Giménez Smith

JP came to us with ideas, and Evan tried to enact as many as he could, but he also was thoughtful about how much the form could reflect the content (the cover, for example). JP had done some of the design work already, and I think that just seems to be something that writers will be doing more and more.

SG: I absolutely think the collaborative effort in design is part of what makes us "small." As someone who sits in the cc: line of emails throughout the design process, the amount of care and attention to detail our authors and designers give to each other would simply be impossible on a larger scale.

You charge money for your contests. People are of different minds about this practice. Do you want to mount a defense?

SG: I don't want to mount a defense so much as say that without the contest fees there would be fewer books. We work on a very tight budget, and we have close calls all the time—I personally have to make the decisions about *Will we be able to order more of x book this week or can it wait until x payment comes in?* We publish one winner in each category—fiction and poetry—and we almost always publish a few finalists. All contest fees go into prize money for the two winners and the production of the books that result from that contest. If we didn't hold the contest, we'd publish four to five fewer books each year. I'd say it's worth it to see those four to five books come into the world.

On the map of U.S. poetry, what color is the state of Noemi Press?

SG: My initial instinct is purple. Though, maybe Carmen has a different answer.
CGS: Yes, purple!

We had an open call and were fortunate enough to receive a manuscript from Claire Hero, a visionary book called *Sing, Mongrel*. That was the first full-length book Evan ever designed, and we were thrilled that people were going to get to read that great work. We had a few more open calls, then decided to move into a contest model. We felt like we would get a much wider range of books to consider (which we have).

<http://www.noemipress.org/>

Sarah Gzemski (<http://www.theadironackreview.com/sarahgzemski.html>) is a poet and nonfiction writer from Pennsylvania. She earned her B.A. in creative writing/secondary education at Susquehanna University, where she served as poetry editor and managing editor of *The Susquehanna Review*, a national undergraduate literary magazine. Currently living in Mesilla, N.M., she is working toward her M.F.A. in poetry at New Mexico State University. There her projects have focused on disaster, life in rural Pennsylvania, and feminist interpretations of parables. Some of her work has appeared in *Emerge Literary Journal* and *The Adirondack Review*. Her nonfiction/poetry/photography chapbook, *Centralia*, is forthcoming from *Porkbelly Press*.

Lauren Neeffe (<http://www.laneeffe.net/index/#/new-gallery-5/>) is a Brittain postdoctoral fellow at Georgia Tech. Her poetry has appeared in *1913 A Journal of Forms* and *Kenning Journal* and has been featured in readings by the New York-based poetry-performance collaborative *Emotive Fruition*. Her scholarly avatar specializes in Romantic media studies, especially poetry, letters, print culture, and sound.

Born in New York, poet Carmen Giménez Smith (<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/carmen-gimenez-smith>) earned a B.A. in English from San Jose State University and an M.F.A. in creative writing from the University of Iowa. She writes lyric essays as well as poetry, and is the author of the poetry chapbook *Casanova Variations*, the full-length collection *Odalisque* in *Pieces*, and the memoir *Bring Down the Little Birds: On Mothering, Art, Work, and Everything Else*. Her most recent book, *Milk and Filth*, was a finalist for the *National Book Critics Circle Award*. Giménez Smith's work explores issues affecting the lives of females, including *Latina* identity, and frequently references myth and memory. She is the editor-in-chief of *Puerto del Sol* and publisher of *Noemi Press*. She teaches at *New Mexico State University* in Las Cruces, N.M.



Patricia Carragon
Bensonhurst, Brooklyn
Film Noir

The scene was film noir. A man and woman sat in a parked car. The man was in the driver's seat. The woman was next to him. They looked at each other without saying a word, but this was not a love story. The woman's face was bloodied. The man's hands were lacerated. On the back seat, the baby was silent, but we don't know if he was asleep or dead. It was too dark to see if he was covered in his own blood, or in the man's or woman's. We don't know if the man or woman were his parents or kidnappers, or why the man's hands were lacerated, or why the woman's face was bloodied, or why all three characters were in the car, or why this was not a love story. The scene suddenly shifted and the car went off the cliff. And the dreamer woke up before the mystery was solved.



Tantra-zawadi
Park Slope, Brooklyn
Two Haiku

Haiku #4

Release her, I say
To enjoy her play of dreams
Like a brilliant star

Haiku #20

Aging and worry
Decades of storms and laughter
All days of summer



Hilary Sideris
Kensington, Brooklyn

Max

You look so little,
I'd love to watch

your teeny fingers
thread a needle, sew

a button on. Although
we haven't met, since

opposites attract, how
would you like to wed

a klutz with big mitts
and chutzpah? Folks

give me a wide berth
due to my jokes and

girth, which works for
me, unless they're you.

Would you be up
for a pre-nup?



Austin Alexis
The East Village

Lunar Musings

The richest 4 % of the American population might buy the moon; they'll assume it's for sale. And, should they purchase the moon, will they leave room on it for saloon owners from Madison, truck drivers from Memphis, hairdressers from Montana, fast food workers from Minneapolis when there's no more unused land on Earth?

Or will the moneyed few develop it in a way that makes the moon a minefield for the average Joe, a place one doesn't dare to go unless one's able to resume on the playland of the moon the lifestyle of the richest 4%.

Poetry Bios

Austin Alexis's (<http://www.kharahouse.com/2012/05/online-find-531-interview-with-poet.html>) first book, *Privacy Issues*, won the Naomi Long Madgett Poetry Award and was published by Wayne State University Press. **Patricia Carragon** (<http://brownstonepoets.blogspot.com/p/patricias-poetry-corner.html>) is the author of *Urban Haiku and More* (Fierce Grace Press). She hosts the Brooklyn-based Brownstone Poets and edits its annual anthology. **James Harvey** (<http://www.somanytumbleweeds.com/groom.pdf>) has lived in Park Slope for 12 years. **Bob Heman** is the editor of *CLWN WR* (<http://www.clwnwr.org/Name.htm>). His e-books *Demographics*, or, *The Hats They Are Allowed to Wear* and *How It All Began* can be downloaded for free at the Quale Press website. **Bob McNeil** (<http://frankandpoe.blogspot.com/2014/04/first-place-poem.html>) is the author of *Secular Sacraments* and the poetry editor for *BLACFAX*. **Hilary Sideris's** (<http://www.hilarysiderispoetry.com>) poems have appeared in *Fourteen Hills*, *Poet Lore*, *Poetry Daily*, and many other publications. She develops curriculum for CUNY's CUNY Start program. **Tantra Zawadi's** (<http://www.tantra-zawadi.com/>) latest book is *Bubbles: One Conscious Breath* (Poets Wear Prada).



Bob Heman
Bensonhurst, Brooklyn

3 from The Serpent Variations

THERE WERE NO LONGER ANY BIRDS. They had eaten every one. But still the taste of the fruit lingered. Their bodies had changed into things they did not know. They no longer hesitated to leave the garden. Whichever direction they chose would be the right one.

THIS TIME THE TREE was an animal wrapped in leaves and the fruit a piece of its still beating heart. Their hands were bloody when they returned to the resting place, an unfamiliar desire inserted where wonder once had grown. Their trail out of the garden was the one the animal had used to approach.

THERE WAS NO FUTURE in the garden. There was no past. When they walked each step they took was the first step. When they stopped they had never moved at all. The song they sang had only one note. It had no beginning and no end. Once the serpent spoke it did not matter what they did. The fruit it offered them was only a decoration. It was then they stepped into tomorrow.



James Harvey
Park Slope, Brooklyn

Jane looks best in a box-jacket

Every time I do not call Mother back I break her itchy heart. She is shrinking. Her hair is peach tinted. She types letters, loves her sons so. Every time I call Mother back I glut her engorged heart. She is giant. Her hair is falling off. Every time Mother calls me back she breaks my melon heart. Bad connection, muted purpose. I am thickening, my hair is relentless. Every time Mother calls me back I let it ring and ring and ring. The telephone is an enormous black; cord coils down an endless hallway. Every time I call Mother back she answers on the first ring. She's almost gone. She's been waiting three lifetimes for my concern. Every time I call my Mother back she hangs up on me mid-mumble.



Bob McNeil
Hollis, Queens

Commuting into Myself

The fare to travel
this visceral subway
always goes up.

Commuting into myself
reveals train tracks
are my bones,
third rails
are my nerves
and hungry rats
encapsulate my disposition.

Superego Transit Cops believe
my feelings could be underground cells,
all anarchistic in nature,
so they check the bags
under my eyes,
considering if that's where
I keep my pipe bomb visions.

My ill temper transfers
from train to train,
from thought to thought.

Sure enough,
my neuroses out gripes
sexagenarian grumblers
with each train delay,
derelict aspirations panhandle,
pleading to get some pleasure,
and my other big bipolar hordes
can't get their problems
through the exits.

The Inner Voice
Address System
apologizes about the traffic
up ahead.
It explains why
turtles in a tar pit
would be better at transporting
me to my destination.

Ever a philomath,
I inspect the transit map
and seek life's right station.
Maybe,
perhaps on the next ride,
I'll find it.

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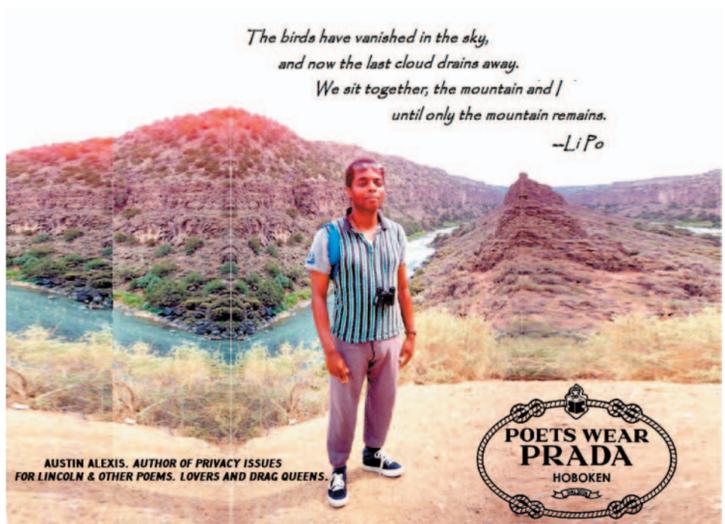
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Beach Poets Reading Beach Books



BY MARK GURARIE

The poem is a seagull resting on a pier at the end of the ocean.
—Jack Spicer

New York City in the summer is the New York I moved to back in 2005. After two years of San Francisco's mild and dry temperatures, the city was a hot, wet slap to the face. What I didn't know then—and what many fail to appreciate—is that the city is coastal and offers access to some truly gorgeous beaches: Ft. Tilden, the Rockaways, even Coney Island. And what's particularly nice about the city is that it's not San Diego, you can go to the beach and have a real, intellectual conversation because Brooklyn-based beach bums read actual books!

In this spirit, I caught up with some New York-based poets to talk about what books they're planning to bring to the beach. I also became curious about what they considered to be a favored beach poem, something which to them was evocative of waves and of sand and of a penetrating, pervasive sun.

So, next time you're stepping over sun bathers and searching for a nice spot on the beach, look out for these poets and for these books.



Up first, **Lisa Marie Basile** enlightens us about her favorite beach poem and what books she's bringing along to the dunes:

Boog City: So, what is your favorite beach poem?

Lisa Marie Basile: Marosa di Giorgio's "XXXV," from *History of Violets* (Ugly Ducking Presse), is one of my favorite beach reads. Gorgeous, nature-oriented, spiritual, bizarre, and magical.

And what are you bringing to the beach this year?

Richard Siken's *War of the Foxes* (Copper Canyon Press). Holy shit, what a killer. Also reading Action Books' just released book *Dark Museum* by Maria Negroni. It's glittering and macabre and sort of like a nonfiction long poem. Also *And The Girls Worried Terribly* (Noemi Press) by Dot Devota. Beautiful form and language.



I then caught up with **Katie Byrum**, whose poems might be likened to a beach during a storm.

Boog City: What's your favorite beach poem?

Katie Byrum: Muriel Rukeyser has this long sectioned poem from her 1968 book *The Speed of Darkness* called "The Outer Banks" and I love it and return to it often.

And your beach reads?

I am bringing the new David Mitchell jumpoff, *Ghostwritten* (Hodder and Stoughton). And the aptly-named *Beachy Head* (Coconut Books) by Emily Toder. I usually always re-read *The Phantom Tollbooth* (Random House). And if I had to read *The Flamethrowers* (by Rachel Kushner, Scribner) one more time I wouldn't be mad about it. And Rebecca Solnit's book of lyric essays, I guess you would call them, *A Field Guide to Getting Lost* (Penguin Books).

Francesco Grisanzio, as far as I can tell, has never won a surfing competition, but that's never stopped him from bringing a proverbial library to the beach.



Boog City: What's your favorite beach poem?

Francesco Grisanzio: "Beautiful Island" by Zachary Schomburg, from *Fjords* vol. 1 (Black Ocean).

What books are you bringing to the beach this summer?

Unkindness by Alex Phillips (H_NGM_N Books) and *Dome of the Hidden Pavilion* by James Tate (Ecco Press).

Chelsea Whitton places a parasol in the middle of the dune and gives us her take.



Boog City: What is your favorite beach poem?

Chelsea Whitton: "Beach Glass" by Amy Clampitt.

And what will you be bringing along to the beach?

My Sister's Hand In Mine: The Collected Works of Jane Bowles (Macmillan Publishers)

My Struggle: Book 2 (Macmillan Publishers) by Karl Ove Knausgaard

The Argonauts (Graywolf Press) by Maggie Nelson



Among these poets, our next one, **Peter Longofono** is the one most likely to have a ukele in his beach bag.

Boog City: What would you say is your favorite beach poem?

So I don't have a favorite beach poem, per se, but I have a favorite poet, Celan, who sometimes writes about the sea. A powerful and sonically charged piece of his is "Draft of a Landscape" (trans. Michael Hamburger), which appeared in *Poetry* back in 1971.

And what are you bringing to the beach?

I'll probably bring a bunch of Birds, LLC books to the beach this summer, as I won some of them at an auction a while ago and am just now in a position to read them. Particularly looking forward to *The First 4 Books of Sampson Starkweather*, *The French Exit* (by Elissa Gabbert), and *Kings of the Fucking Sea* (by Dan Boehl) based purely on the titles.

Lisa Marie Basile (<http://lunulunamag.com/>) is a *[City in Queens]*, Queens-based poet. She is the author of *Apocryphal* (Noctuary Press) and the editor of *Luna Luna Magazine*.

Katie Byrum (<http://hellohumanblog.tumblr.com/>) is a poet, bartender, and native Kentuckian, currently residing in a loft in Bushwick. Her first collection of poetry is *Burn it Down* (Forklift Books).

Francesco Grisanzio (<http://www.bortquarterly.com/>) is the author of the chapbook *Stories & Centauries* (Strange Machine Books). He lives in Bushwick, where he co-edits BORT Quarterly.

Mark Gurarie (<https://bubblegumandpoppers.wordpress.com/>) is a graduate of the New School's M.F.A. Program in Poetry, and his writing has appeared in *Brooklyn Review*, *Everyday Genius*, *Paper Darts*, *Publishers Weekly*, *The Rumpus*, and elsewhere. He works as an adjunct instructor online and free-lances as a copywriter. He also occasionally blogs about irrelevant matters at the above url.

Peter Longofono's (<http://www.theoperatingsystem.org/4th-annual-napomo-303030-day-20-peter-longofono-on-paul-celan/>) poems and criticism have appeared or are forthcoming in *Boog City*, *Coldfront*, *H_NGM_N*, *Luna Luna Magazine*, *tenderloin*, and *The Operating System*. He lives in Williamsburg, Brooklyn.

Chelsea Whitton is a Ridgewood, Queens-based poet and copywriter. Her poems have appeared in various print and web publications including *Bateau*, *Ilk*, *Sixth Finch*, and *WomenArts Quarterly*.

So I don't have a favorite beach poem, per se, but I have a favorite poet (Celan) who sometimes writes about the sea. A powerful and sonically charged piece of his is 'Draft of a Landscape.' —Peter Longofono

To Capture Beauty: New Egyptian Poetry



BY CATHERINE WALD

The Tahrir of Poems: Seven Contemporary Egyptian Poets

Edited and Translated by Maged Zaher

Alice Blue Books

Read any contemporary Egyptian poets lately? Then let me introduce you to Maged Zaher, the translator and editor of this anthology, who will in turn present seven striking compatriots in this first-ever bound volume produced by independent West Coast publisher Alice Blue Books.

A winner of the MacArthur genius award in literature in 2013, Zaher has published three books of poetry and is a dedicated translator. He divides his time between his native Cairo and Seattle and is active in the poetry communities of both locations. You can get a glimpse of his sensibility from his book titles: *Portrait of the Poet as an Engineer* (Pressed Wafer), *The Revolution Happened and You Didn't Call Me* (Tinfish Press), and *Thanks for the Window Office* (Ugly Duckling Presse), which *Pleiades* praised for its "dispassionate passion." Certainly it is this at play when he writes, in *The Revolution Happened and You Didn't Call Me*: "Nationhood is mostly a practice/ Killing demonstrators (for example)/ Or staying up all night/ Sipping tea with reporters."

Zaher considers translation an act of friendship and communication, and it's obvious this grouping of seven of his Egyptian contemporaries—all of whom he knows personally—was a labor of love as well as an opportunity to turn Americans onto Arabic language voices that are much more familiar and close to home than might be expected.

All of the poets are native Arabic speakers, although one, Amira Hanafi, chooses to write poetry in English.

Zaher elegantly translates the rest of the poets' black humor as it verges on despair.

For example, Ibrahim El-Sayed's *Untitled* describes the intersection of the human body and the body politic:

Because the fascism that grew in schools/
Currently invades the streets/
My girlfriend will be afraid of her body/
Her neutral body/
Like a trustworthy ally/
In the battle of love

These poets "came of age in [former Egyptian Pres. Hosni] Mubarak's era where neither the government nor the Islamist opposition cared much for them," says Zaher. "It was a freeing landscape, yet it would take many of them a gigantic effort to escape nihilism."

Witness Malaka Badr's anguish in the poem "A slaughtered chicken a few minutes before death," which meditates on the futility of individual action:

I thought
To stand up and organize the room.
And cut my nails
Or put on lipstick
That no one will see.
I wash the dishes or break them for a change.
I pace around myself,
Do some crunches,
Or go out to the balcony cheapened by voyeurism.
I smoke two cigarettes without feeling them
Or flirt with a mouse on the opposing roof.
I write and erase...
My feet are swollen.
My fingers are numb.
I double-check the acne on my face
Before I throw my sixth cigarette
At the serpentine souls,
The werewolves of the streets,
And go inside to die a little...

These young poets, all between 25 and 33 at the time of publication, also explore conflicts within family, cultural traditions, and individual identity. Ahmed Nada, in "Dad" insists that "If someone told him about my dreams he would crucify me according to Sharia law," while Amira Hanafi confesses in a prose poem: "Even though I divorced/ my family, all twenty-six of them, I still support them with bags of rice for as long as I'm around."

These poets have a keen sense of the absurd, along with the very human longing to somehow have it all make sense. Aya Nabih expresses a sardonic humor combined with hopefulness for the future in "In the Beginning Was the Void.":

Without having to exaggerate
I can say that the void is world-sized
Everything else is an imposter
Which implies that all things -
—including small and useless small things—
Are the enemies of the void...
Maybe what I assumed now can be used
To the advantage of these small things
Say, it gives them a reason for existence
And reduces their silliness.

Speaking of details, the book did not offer any information about the poets' biographies, which I felt was a missed opportunity. My reading would have benefited from a sense of the writers' professional backgrounds, not to mention their gender; very little information on the poets is readily available on the Internet, at least in English.

Zaher's introduction to the book is eloquent, pithy, and perhaps too short. As your typical ignorant American, I would have appreciated a bit more background on Arab Spring and its impact on Egyptian artists. From what I could gather, here's a quick rundown: the 2011 revolution based in Tahrir Square euphorically dubbed "Arab Spring," has resulted in two changes of power over the past four years and very little political change. As Michael J. Totten explains in a 2014 *World Affairs Journal*, Egypt is "right back where it started. ... The new regime and its supporters are no more liberal or democratic than Mubarak's or [former Egyptian Pres. Mohamed] Morsi's. In some ways, they're worse." None of the regimes have been supportive of artists or free expression.

On the other hand, I fully appreciate Zaher's implicit wish to let the reader do their own homework about his country and culture, and to learn that literature in other languages has much to offer. Observe: contemporary poets all over the world are exploring and reexamining forms such as the prose poem and experimenting with upending and reinterpreting everyday language.

Too, the poems speak for themselves, eloquently unveiling the details of daily life in an atmosphere of political and moral repression, the absurdities and indignities of dealing with totalitarian violence and fear while trying to capture beauty. Hermes' (a pseudonym) "Small Bloody Song" which begins:

I will write a poem/
That ignores the current events./
I will drown it in metaphorical explosions/
And linguistic volcanoes

and ends:

I mean poetry/
Doesn't investigate the body/
Except by detonating it/
Into small bloody songs.

Catherine Wald, the author of the chapbook *Distant, burned-out stars* (Finishing Line Press) and *The Resilient Writer: Tales of Rejection and Triumph* from 23 Top Authors (Persea Books), lives in Manhattan's Upper West Side. She has never been to Cairo but has visited Seattle several times. Her poems have appeared in *American Journal of Nursing*, *Buddhist Poetry Journal*, *Chronogram*, *Classical Poets*, *Exit 13*, *The 5-2 Crime Poetry Weekly*, *The Lyric*, *The New Poet*, and *Westchester Review*.



Maged Zaher

The poems speak for themselves, eloquently unveiling the details of daily life in an atmosphere of political and moral repression, the absurdities and indignities of dealing with totalitarian violence and fear while trying to capture beauty.

The Death and Life of American Architecture Atelier Spatial America Rises from the Ashes of Special America



BY MARK GURARIE

THE CONTEXT AGAINST THE TEXT

Between the years of 2008 and 2015, Special America existed at the intersection of art and provocation, blending media to anarchically interrogate the meaning of poetry and language in the increasingly commercialized, digitized, paralyzed worlds we inhabit. As Claire Donato and Jeff T. Johnson, whose performances were Special America, might have told you, it was “an exercise in and exorcism of American Exceptionalism.” In April of this year, Boog City caught up with Special America in the cloud in order to conduct what was provisionally termed “A Not Particularly Linear Interview with Special America.” We talked about Mondays, print, the capability (or lack thereof) of speech among other topics, but what emerged in the interview was the declaration that Special America had run its course.

In the time since, as Special America crossed itself out, a new iteration of the project did emerge from the ashes of the original: Atelier Spatial America. It is, as described in “Atelier Spatial America Prongs (ASAP): A Manifesto” “an experiment in reordering the body that once was Special America as much as it is an experiment in radical pedagogy,” and therein “to perform the role of architect-designers” by collaborating with students and colleagues in “reimagining the role of architecture and design.” In keeping with the anti-hierarchical nature of its predecessor, Donato and Johnson affirm that their lack of expertise in architecture is exactly what gives them authority to practice what they call Speculative Archeological Design; they look to celebrate, archive, and remix “unrealizable projects” and impossible designs and present them in the pedagogical manner of the art class critique. In doing so their aim is to “[l]iberate architecture from the death drive of discipline!”

As such, here you will find the cobbled together remains of two interviews: one from April with Special America, and another, with Atelier Spatial America, from late May.

AN EXERCISE IN AND EXORCISM OF SPECIAL AMERICA

Boog City: Say Special America, is an America still possible? Is an American still possible in poetry?

Special America: We are all Americans, Mark. Say Special America! We are, all of us, becoming-American, and therefore will have been Special American. As for what is possible, or still possible, in poetry I do not know, I do not know. An America, now that seems unlikely. But a House of An American Activities is certainly on its way!

You’ve made a film, so this question is “industry” related: how many chapbooks does it take to get to the center of Oakland? One word or too few?

By Oakland you mean the Oakland-Brooklyn Status Update, yes? The OBSU is more than an industry, it is a science. And a state of minus. Many chapbooks. The many few word junction. We made a film but cannot watch it, ashamed as we are of our almost complete egoism. Thus Special Amerancholy took hold.

And so what do we make of print? Medium screwed, completely haywire, or soon to be renewed? How many Americans does the so-called “average horse” have in the market?



We make colonies of print. As becoming-Americans, the salient majority of Special Americans were to have moved beyond the confines of tree-based publishing schemata, but the paperwork was lost at the orifice, and all we got was this damned T-top. A horse is a course and the medium squirms under massage, because Special America prefers not to be touched.

Is there any pertinent information about Special America you’d like to include?

Hmm, well, Special America might no longer exist, or might not have been existent. So we’d like to pass that along. The good Maria Damon said we might be cracking a chrysalis, and we like the sound of that, but we’re tired of the old affects, the dawg and po-knee shorts, the oily visage. And what emerges from said chrysalis: butterfly or dragon? Maybe next we’ll tour the history of Special America from the perfect past as we recoup the future perfect. Stay tuned for lectures on the relative history of a precarious anti-concept, our good and toasted Special America! Coming and going soon!

IF NOT BY DESIGN: AN INTERVIEW WITH ATELIER SPATIAL AMERICA

Boog City: What could be less American than failure? What could be more? Can you talk a little about Atelier Spatial America’s relationship to failure?

Atelier Spatial America: Atelier Spatial America is born of failure—or rather, it is reborn of failure, since it inherits (and mutates) Special America’s inherent concern with failure. Besides being the collapsed structure—the failed project—from which Atelier Spatial America is born, one might say Special America was always also a performance of failure—of the failure of American exceptionalism, the failure of what we called community-driven exceptionalism, the failure to be self-aware even in self-absorption. The two of us are not exempt from any of these failures, and Special America

performances alluded to our own personal and interpersonal failures: our struggle as a new couple living together in Providence, R.I. at the peak of the 2008 recession; our frustrations with adjunct labor and the Poetry Industrial Complex; the temptation to self-mythologize and update our bios and CVs; feelings of inadequacy as poets, aesthetes, and activists; the ongoing performance of melancholy and abjection inherent in being artists. We often say Special America is (or was!) our most autobiographical work. Just as integral was our participation in any community we drew into Special America—chiefly the digital writing community and the NYC poetry community.

If Special America performed failure as triumphalism, it took its toll on us as performers. Toward the end of the project, we were preoccupied with how emotionally and physiologically drained Special America’s slick and unctuous affects made us feel. Writing and rehearsing Special America stopped being fun, and too often we embodied the inherent conflicts and contradictions of the project to the point where that animosity became part of our relationship. Following performances, we woke up drained and depressed, and felt anxious about the hostilities (and potential harms) bred by the project. In Atelier Spatial America, this concern with failure becomes explicit and even foundational, and this could be a more outward-looking approach that does not require us to be swallowed by our own array of affective registers. That approach was fun but exhausting. The mask threatened to stick; pieces of our faces have still not grown back. As Timothy Morton says in Hyperobjects (in one of his all-too-rare concise formulations), “Your face is a map of everything that happened to it.” To be clear, this does not mean we seek a safer project—we want to create a riskier proposition by seeking a path from radicality to revolution. We are still discovering what this might look like.

There was a disconnect between how seriously we took Special America and how seriously other people took it. And to a great extent, we are responsible for that disconnect, based as it is on the limitations of our presentation and performance.

What does a poet or architect know about the future of architecture or poetry or both? Only as much as we are willing to imagine together—which requires us to think beyond the given to what might be possible under different conditions.

Nevertheless, we were fortunate enough to be nudged along by a number of individuals (e.g., John Cayley, Andrew Klobucar, Sharla Sava, Danniell Schoonebeek, Emily Skillings, Talan Memmott, Juana Hodari, Todd Anderson, Maria Damon, Nick Monfort, Flourish Klink, Chris Funkhouser, Alan Sondheim, Stephanie Boluk, Patrick LeMieux, Mark Marino, Rob Wittig, Jim Bizzocchi, Eric Snodgrass, Jake Kennedy, Kevin

McPherson Eckhoff, and others) who helped us push and think along with the project. At its most effective, Special America drew people in. What made us realize Special America is dead was people’s willingness and ability to follow the architectural imperative (at Granoff Auditorium, the primal scene between Special America and Atelier Spatial America) to sit back and watch our final performance.

Skipping forward to Atelier Spatial America, the embrace of failure as foundational doesn’t get us off the hook—we still have to reflect on our own participation in oppressive practices. We’re both instructors of Architecture Writing at Pratt Institute, and we’re fortunate to teach (together!) at a place that values our art and wants us to challenge but also encourage our students’ thinking. But it’s still too easy to think of them as our students, and to reinforce power relations that can’t help but repress students’ ability to reshape the future. Any pedagogy relies too much on the past—in an architecture program, students may speculate about future design, but we habitually refer them back to precedent and existing conditions. How can we help students see a future that is different from the catastrophic, bankrupt, unimaginative one we’ve failed to avert? That’s a question students can help us answer.

Is the architect dead in American poetry? Is the poet dead in American architecture?

Neither of us is formally trained in architecture or design, and this lack of formal training is integral to Atelier Spatial America. As we state in our manifesto, “[this] is to our great advantage in reimagining the role of architecture and design.” Here and in our project, we speak from our particular perspectives as writers (and as writers with particular perspectives, particular poetics) who teach writing to architecture students and read architecture books and blogs.

As architecture writing instructors, we talk with students about the ways architecture provides metaphors and reference points for the arts, and writing in particular—especially poetry and poetics, which are the foundation for our writing practices. We also explore the ways poetics (not just prosody and formal considerations, but poetry in the world, and the relation between ethics and aesthetics) informs architecture and design. We find the exchange particularly invigorating, because students know more about architecture than we do, and we have more experience with poetry and poetics than they do. In order for architecture and poetics to speak to one another in a more substantial way (beyond metaphorical relation), we have to combine our relative expertise, but we also have to question the grounds of our expertise. What does a poet or architect know about the future of architecture or poetry or both? Only as much as we are willing to imagine together—which requires us to think beyond the given to what might be possible under different conditions. And if we want different conditions—for example, those more amenable to a just and joyful world—we have to create those conditions. Poets and architects might have a hand in designing such a world, but only if we work (and play!) together and think beyond the world we have now. Poets and architects are not dead to one another, but we might need to rebuild ourselves in preparation for a better world.

We are thinking now about the Zen Buddhist concept of *shoshin*, or beginner’s mind—that space where even advanced practitioners cultivate an attitude of openness and not-knowing, a healthy skepticism related to self and world. Shunryū Suzuki says, “In the beginner’s mind there are many possibilities, in the expert’s mind there are few.” As we develop Atelier Spatial America, and get a better sense of what it is and how it works, we hope the ethos of beginner’s mind attends our practice.

Mark Gurarie (<https://bubblegumandpoppers.wordpress.com/>) is a graduate of the New School’s M.F.A. Program in Poetry, and his writing has appeared in Brooklyn Review, Everyday Genius, Paper Darts, Publishers Weekly, The Rumpus, and elsewhere. He works as an adjunct instructor online and free-lances as a copywriter. He also occasionally blogs about irrelevant matters at the above url.

Yakovlev’s Under the Sea



BY KEVIN WALTER

Neptune Court
Anton Yakovlev
Operating System

Anton Yakovlev’s *Neptune Court*, the poet’s first chapbook, is a collection that’s fixated on memory and location, on love and loss. Despite the formal consistency employed throughout, each vivacious poem has the power to transport you to a uniquely strange universe wherein you might see “a sickly zebra/ drive a motorboat across the East River,” or perhaps you might be careening “toward the Field of Wild Turkeys/ where your heart used to race so often,” but you’ll never feel like you’re taking a detour. In these poems, which are classically lyrical and unabashedly sentimental, we are reminded that “[w]e’re all born in strange worlds” which we only make stranger by simply existing within them, imbuing them with our idiosyncratic perceptions like “[t]he rain on the roof of the bus stop/ [that] sounds like an ice cream truck.” There is a generosity in the sincerity that permeates this collection: as the author guides us through each cinematographic terrain, he populates his worlds with heartfelt and relatable characters. And, refreshingly, there’s not a moment of snark to be seen. Yakovlev is equal parts genuine, grave, and bemused (much like Death, who appears “wearing mittens over his heart”). Many of the poems explore the various losses endured by these characters, and sorrowful reminders pop up unexpectedly: “I saw your shape on the hood of my pickup truck,/ traced in rock-hard snow.” So, too, does a supernatural force—“God peeks in through the sunroof” but, of course, does not sit in the front seat along with the speaker. He might not be able to handle the unnerving, but innervating, energy of this strange universe and the beauty which Yakovlev resolutely champions.



Originally from Quincy, Mass., Kevin Walter lives in Bushwick, Brooklyn, and is a co-founder and co-editor of BORT Quarterly. His poems and reviews have appeared or are forthcoming in Coldfront; Forklift, Ohio; Handsome; Publishers Weekly; Sixth Finch; and The Greying Ghost Press.



Summer Screenings Around the Town



BY JOEL SCHLEMOWITZ

With an unforgiving New York winter now long behind us, it's now time to delight in being out and about, taking in the sights and sounds of the city, and attending the many experimental film screenings happening through the season. Let's meander around, perhaps taking a moment to soak in the pleasant evening and sit at an outdoor cafe for a little while before the cinema is ready to open the house?

Sat., June 20 will be the occasion for boarding the Brooklyn-bound L train to disembark at the Jefferson Street Station to attend a rare screening at Microscope Gallery (1329 Willoughby Ave., Bushwick, Brooklyn). A new work by Paris-based filmmaker Boris Lehman, *My Seven Places*, will screen. Lehman is the maker of quasi-autobiographical works existing in the liminal space between documentary and narrative, and imbued with a low-key mordant wit. The result is that his films are exceedingly appealing to view without an explicit answer as to what makes this so.

We will continue on to spend an evening or two at Rooftop Films, now in their 18th year of showing films al fresco. They've recently partnered with Industry City in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, where they kicked off their opening night on Fri., May 29. The series program director, Dan Nuxoll, proudly introduced the short film program by declaring "These are not 'calling cards' made to show to some producer or agent."

At 8:00 p.m. on Fri. June 19 at 220 36th St. in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, Rooftop Films will present a program of shorts assembled together under the heading of "New York Non-Fiction" and will include a new work by Tomonari Nishikawa, a filmmaker whose work was reviewed in a previous issue of *Boog City* (<http://www.boogcity.com/boogpdfs/bc88.pdf>). Another of Nishikawa's films, with the evocative title *sound of a million insects, light of a thousand stars* composed of two minutes of 35mm film that was buried at night near the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station, thereby "exposing" the film to the background radiation, will also be included in a program of documentary shorts at Rooftop Films on Thurs. July 2.

Continuing through the cinematic summer offerings we come to the New York premiere of *La Frequenza Fantasma* by London-based filmmaker Chiara Ambrosio taking place at 7:30 p.m. on Wed. June 24, at Anthology Film Archives at Second Avenue and Second Street in The East Village. The film is a work of visual anthropology seen through a poetically imbued lens, the portrait of an old, Italian village located within the hollow of a sloping mountainside. It has been decommissioned in favor of new, cheap housing—which remains unseen in the film—and now the rustic, old edifices moulder with little intervention, the town's streetlights and churches the last living appendages of its deteriorating hide.

On Thurs. June 25 at 8:00 p.m. Millennium Film Workshop at Brooklyn Fire Proof (119 Ingraham St. in Bushwick, Brooklyn) presents the work of Chicago-based filmmaker Adele Friedman. Her work—observational and silent—spans several decades of prolific artistry from the seventies to the present day.

Back at Microscope Gallery on Fri. June 26 a group screening of works in a program called "Projection Instructions" will be presented in conjunction with The Film-Makers Cooperative. As the title suggests, these are films where the artist has provided some unusual set of instructions for the projectionist to present the work, turning the lights on and off during the film, tinting the image with color filters physically held before the projection lens, playing live radio to create a soundtrack that is never the same from one screening to the next.

At 7:00 p.m. Sun., June 28 the Connectivity through Cinema monthly film series presented by Mono No Aware will welcome Pittsburgh-based filmmaker Ross Nugent for a screening of his works at The Center for Performance Research (361 Manhattan Ave, Williamsburg). This will include *Steel Mill Rolling*, an adeptly composed work of 16mm film, documenting the flattening and bending of glowing orange ribbons of metal in the still active mill where his family has worked for the past several decades.

At 8:00 p.m. on Tues., June 30 roving archivist Movie Mike, whose 16mm film collection ranges from the campy to the uncanny, will be on hand to present "Morbid Movie Madness—A Survey of Serials of the '30s and '40s First Chapters of Thrilling Tales in Real 16mm!" at the Morbid Anatomy Museum (424 3rd Ave., Gowanus, Brooklyn). Expect to see a miasma of fantastical kitsch in glorious tones of black and white on vintage celluloid, from submarines plunging to depths to arrive at the Kingdom of Atlantis where oddly costumed horsemen fire ray guns at tin-sheet robots, or hidden cities in the African jungle are protected from the outside world by flying bat men, and Bela Lugosi lets loose with a diabolical laugh as the creator of a grimacing, metallic robot equally gruesome and farcical. These works are especially appealing in contrast to our current age of special effects spectacles for the endearingly primitive qualities of submarines that are models on strings filmed through a fish tank, or the tin robots odd accoutrement of a built-in porkpie hat made of tin sitting atop a crudely fashioned sheet metal head. As Movie Mike has pointed out in his description of the program, first chapters from movie serials will introduce the characters and plot and contain enough excitement to hook the viewer in—excitement that might very well peter out in later chapters.

As the summer progresses we might seek to escape the sultry heat as our forbearers did by repairing to the "air cooled" cinema, and thus on Sun. July 12 at 8:45 p.m. it may be a pleasant time to cool off with a visit the Japan Society (333 E. 47th St.) in Midtown Manhattan for the experimental program in the annual Japan Cuts film festival. The screening will be presented and programmed for the festival by Mono No Aware and features films made in a direct cinema workshop for the occasion along with several other experimental short films (including one by yours truly!). Hope to see you there! Or as one might also say for the occasion, *Jaa mata!*

Joel Schlemowitz (<http://www.joelschlemowitz.com>) is a Park Slope, Brooklyn-based filmmaker who makes short cine-poems and experimental documentaries. His most recent project, "78rpm," is in the final stages of post-production. He has taught filmmaking at The New School for the past 15 years. Schlemowitz photo by Robyn Hasy.

Microscope Gallery (<http://www.microscopegallery.com>) • Rooftop Films (<http://rooftopfilms.com/2015/schedule/>)

Anthology Film Archives (http://anthologyfilmarchives.org/film_screenings) • Connectivity through Cinema (<http://mononoawarefilm.com/special-engagements/>)

Morbid Anatomy Museum (<http://morbidanatomymuseum.org/events/>) • Japan Cuts (<http://www.japansociety.org/page/programs/film>)

Rooftop Films kicked off their opening night on Fri., May 29 in Industry City in Sunset Park, Brooklyn. The series program director, Dan Nuxoll, proudly introduced the short film program by declaring: 'These are not "calling cards" made to show to some producer or agent.'

Joel Schlemowitz photo



Won't Travel Alone, She Traveled With Me Cinematic Rock from The First Law



BY JESSE STATMAN

A common stereotype of amateur or student-made films is to begin by fading in to the protagonist's eyes opening, in the morning, to the sound of an alarm clock, before walking into a bleak, redundant, painfully ordinary reality. At some point in the first act, this reality often becomes just a *little* bit more interesting; maybe the protagonist gets a promotion at the office, or is invited to join a cult, or falls in love with that mysterious coworker in the neighboring cubicle.

Nyack, N.Y.-based cinematic rock band The First Law's sophomore album *She Traveled With Me*, released at the end of 2014, is not a student-made film, and it's far from stereotypical, but it has a heavy dose of nostalgia and fantastical lyrics. So, naturally, it begins with what seems like a nostalgic, fantastical homage to the aforementioned stereotype. The opening track, "I Woke Up," fades in to the protagonist waking up at two in the morning, to the sound of a passing train. What follows is a slew of flashbacks, stories, thoughts, and dreams, sung by our protagonist over dynamic instrumentation. It all weaves together to form a dense, surreal tapestry of his life, somehow clocking in at under 35 minutes.

In the second track, "Brother Song," we're taken to the middle of another night, and another kind of waking up. The protagonist's baby brother is born, in his grandmother's apartment during a hurricane. As is revealed in the last verse of the song, the brother has since died, and the protagonist places some of the blame on himself. Whether this is the story of singer/songwriter/composer/pianist Nate Flaks's actual brother, a metaphor, or completely fictional, the song brings this story to life, in a fittingly heartbreaking way. "Oh, baby brother, I didn't save your life; I tied the noose I asked you to lean on."

The third track, "Context & Symmetry," sees the protagonist in a state of complete agony, mourning a loss; the loss could be of his brother, it could be the loss of the she who traveled with him, or it could be both. Whatever the case, it's a loss that's cut him deeply. As he makes clear in this song, he doesn't want to move on; he believes the one he lost will come back, and he's waiting with this pain until it happens. The abstraction here gives way to a deeper, more universal emotion; is he singing of a younger brother who died, who he hopes will rise from the grave? Is he singing of a lost love, who he hopes will return to his life?

Like most of the album, it resonates with both, and the lyrics and melody can stand alone, outside of the context, no pun intended, of the album, while still playing into the continuous story being told. "And though it's the one thing that I own, I'd trade my ear for a pound of gold; and if that gold can't stay, then I'll throw it on the silver screen. If I can't say what I mean, let the silence say it for me."

"The Unconventionalist" is an instrumental interlude; a minimal and haunting piano composition, leading into the title track, where the audience is introduced to the she of *She Traveled With Me*. A film is being made, and the equipment is described in intricate, poetic detail, along with the eggs being fried for the cast and crew's breakfast. She is an actor in the film, and a central character to the plot of this story, but her complete mystery might be the most exciting component to her allure; almost nothing is known of this woman, leaving many doors open to the audience's imagination.

If *She Traveled With Me* became a film, she might only appear physically in one scene. One of the only lyrics directly describing her in the whole album refers to her as "nearly invisible" while being filmed in a tent, for a scene in the film involving chromakeying. Chromakeying, ideally, does the opposite of turning someone invisible; it turns a green or blue screen invisible, behind an actor, who remains visible. On the other hand, poor lighting conditions can cause the actor to stand out less from the background, sometimes making the actor nearly invisible, or making the green or blue screen visible. This can be seen on some public access TV shows and low-budget independent films.



Leah Ansell photo

Nate Flaks.

Obscure film terminology aside, it all furthers the notion of a love unbound by material façades. We don't know what she looks like, we don't know if the film she's acting in is any good, but we know how much the protagonist loves her. In fact, while the romance between the two is clearly implied, it's not even directly stated. If the album's lyrics were interpreted literally, by a machine, this intense, passionate bond would likely be seen as platonic, a few steps deeper than the narrator's connection to another friend of his, who dies in the title track. To human ears, though, the romance is clear, by the time an entire ensemble of singers enters into the mix, repeating "Won't travel alone, she traveled with me." "Something Solid" is a particularly moving song, where the focus turns to the conflict between art and romance, a dilemma many artists face. "Stawamus Lullaby" closes out the album, with multiple characters singing the narrator back to sleep, to the sound of an acoustic guitar. "Sleep now, love, without some truth. Hope is our fiction, but doubt is, too."

She Traveled With Me is a roller-coaster ride of emotion, packed to the brim with abstract stories and motifs. It's the kind of concept album that feels more like a movie or a book than music, and there are references to cinema and literature throughout to remind us of this. Nate Flaks's piano, vocals, and songwriting are the driving force behind the record, but the studio band, including cellist Natasha Jaffe (recorded in Berlin), and drummer Donald Perdomo (who, coincidentally, plays drums in a band called And The Traveler), adds extra depth and atmosphere to the story. And the story, in a time of instant solipsistic non-communication, effectively ineffective multitasking, rampant consumerism, and apathy (the causes and effects of which have been critiqued, parodied, and/or acknowledged by almost every living artist in the 21st century), is a refreshing invitation into the timeless, genuine, romantic side of the human condition, and a cathartic reminder of the sorrow and peril that travel with it.

Jesse Statman (<http://cannonballstatman.com>) was part human and part dog. Recently, Statman faked his own death, and was reincarnated as a musician. He now plays guitar and drums, barks, and writes about other people's music. Statman is touring the U.S.A. this summer, to celebrate the release of *Shriekofafreak!*, and touring Europe this fall, to celebrate not dying on tour in the U.S.A. Igor Shypitsyn photo.

The First Law (<http://thefirstlaw.bandcamp.com>) formed in 2010 around the music of singer/songwriter Nate Flaks. 2012 saw the release of *The Law's* debut album, *Talking of Michelangelo*, which Liecester Bangs described as "a collection of heartfelt songs with ambitious arrangements and roots in indie and cinematic rock." Their second album, *She Traveled With Me*, was released this past December, followed by a U.S. tour.

What follows is a slew of flashbacks, stories, thoughts, and dreams, sung by our protagonist over dynamic instrumentation. It all weaves together to form a dense, surreal tapestry of his life ...

Ford Crull

Tribeca



<http://www.fordcrull.com/>

Ford Crull was raised in Seattle, where he graduated from the University of Washington. His work is in the collections of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The National Gallery of Art, The Dayton Art Institute, and The Brooklyn Museum. His paintings were included in the important 1989 Moscow exhibition, "Painting After the Death of Painting," curated by Donald Kuspit. Recent exhibitions have included shows in London; Milan, Italy; and Seattle. In 2010 Crull improvised a monolithic painting in one hour for the opening of the new art area of Shanghai, Bund1919. Subsequent performances included Seattle (Birth and Death of a Painting) and for the Woodstock Film Festival (2012)

Crull explores the expressive power of personal and cultural symbols in a series of densely painted and vividly colored compositions. Crull uses identifiable images such as hearts, wings, crosses, and the human figure, as well as geometrical emblems and abstract forms whose meanings are less explicit. Words, in the form of cryptic, fleeting phrases, also animate Crull's pictorial world. Crull employs a myriad of symbols which variously imply a sexual unfolding, romantic suffering, occult wisdom, and transcendental release. These symbols coexist in a psychic atmosphere in which they overlap, dissolve, and reappear with a kind of furious insistence.

Artist's Statement

There is a strong element of the diaristic in Crull's work, with each painting serving as a kind of painterly journal of reflections and reveries, set loose from their origins in specific events. In a wider sense, these paintings constitute a kind of intensive search to wrest meaning from an anarchy of feeling. As meditations on emotional chaos, they enter into a world of competing impulses and simultaneous transmissions, seeking a resolution that is cathartic and mysterious.

Crull's written words act as a kind of voice which emerges from and disappears back into the highly worked surface. The scrawled, fragmentary phrases serve as a kind of conscious counterpoint to the free flowing of gestural abstraction and symbolic forms. Color is the silent partner to language, infusing the welter of images with an enveloping emotional atmosphere, ranging from hot reds and golds to cool shimmering light blues and whites.

"The ambiguity of the image is central to my expression of life in art," says Crull. "The derivation of my symbols, pulled out from the oceanic flow of an unconscious, devolved dream state, reflects a necessity for metamorphosis and recombination that deprives the image of any safe haven. Rather, my images are involved in a perpetual dance, a narrative flow that destroys any preconceived notions or verbal meanings. The viewer is free to associate around the visual text which I present, supplying his own interpretations from his own experiences. Ambiguity of the image forces the viewer into a more intensive study of the work, so that the deeper layers of reality are unveiled, revealing the many facets of an idea, the many levels of its nature. This is the real pleasure of my painting: to present a tableau of associations, an unceasing unfolding of meanings, to offer a glimpse of a more universal state of consciousness, unbound by the limitations of time and convention."



The Red Queen 2014, oil, wax, canvas, 48" x 36".



Heartland 2013, oil, oil stick, canvas, 40" x 30".



4 Shields 2013, oil, oil stick, canvas, 84" x 66".



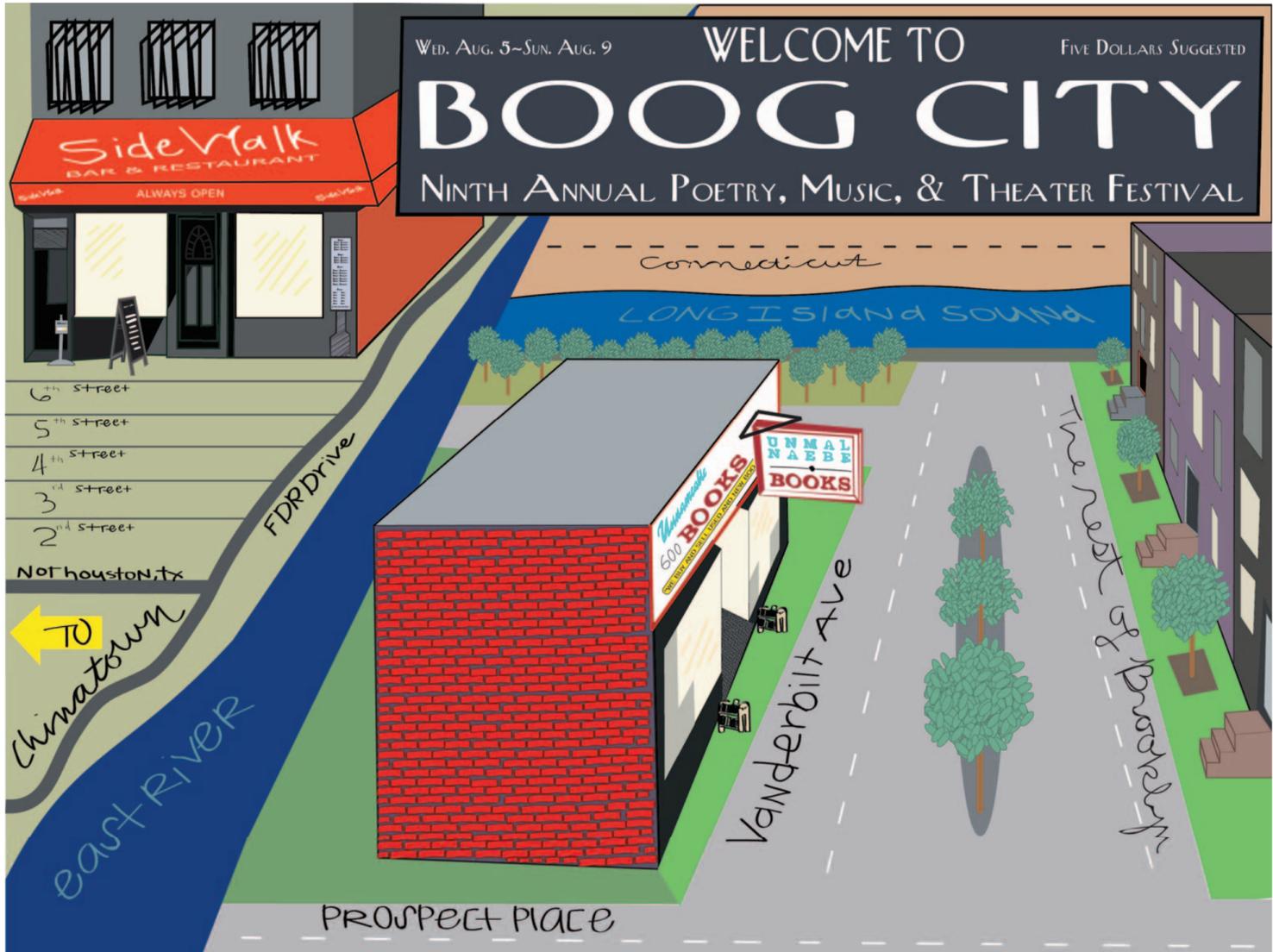
Things to Come 2006-2014, oil, graphite, canvas, 72" x 60".



I,C,F,W,M,X 2014, Oil, oil stick, canvas, 48" x 36".



New Multiculturalism 2012, oil, enamel, oil stick, canvas, 60" x 48".



The ninth annual Welcome to Boog City poetry, music, and theater festival, a fundraiser for Boog and its endeavors is just over two months away. The festival begins on Boog's 24th anniversary, Wed. Aug. 5 at Prospect Heights, Brooklyn's Unnameable Books, running there through Sun. Aug. 9, and concluding that night in The East Village at Sidewalk Cafe.

The poets were booked by Thomas Devaney, Joanna Fuhrman, John Mulrooney, and Jaclyn Sadicario. Our music editor Jesse Statman booked the non-classic album acts. I pitched in with the poetry bookings and booked the classic album acts. Buck Downs is organizing the panel, and Kris Lew curated the poets theater. And thanks to Sam Hall for the nifty logo.

So welcome to Welcome to Boog City 9.

Poets:

d.a. levy lives celebrating renegade presses series featuring Mad House Publications (Philadelphia)

with readings from
Leslie Burnette
Maryan Captan
Miguel Huerta
Philip Mittereder
James Harrison Monaco
David E. Morton
Becca Savana
Sara Schwartz

and music from
Curtis Cooper

A panel curated by Buck Downs on starting and running independent spaces for poetry

Poetry Talk Talk
Ish Klein and Greg Purcell reading and in conversation with one another.

Readings from:

- Kostas Anagnopoulos
- Tyler Antoine
- Cynthia Arriue-King
- Cornelia Barber
- James Barch
- Sandra Beasley
- Jacob Bennett
- Jonathan Berger
- Patrick Blgrave
- Mary Lou Buschi
- Sean Cole
- Ian Davisson
- Ryan DiPetta
- Buck Downs
- Julia Edwards
- Tonya Foster
- Lucas Hunt
- Patricia Spears Jones
- Amanda Killian
- Laura Kochman
- Ruth Lepson
- Andrew Levy
- Chris Lindstrom
- Kate Lutzner
- Kimberly Lyons
- Mitch Manning
- Audrey Mardavich
- Sharon Mesmer
- Rick Mullin
- Marci Nelligan
- Yvette Nepper
- Daniel Nester
- Urayoán Noel
- Geoffrey Olsen
- Alina Pleskova
- Stephen Potter
- Dianca Potts
- Ethel Rackin
- Brown Sanders
- Sarah Sarai
- Laurie Sauborn
- Elizabeth Savage
- Josh Savory
- Emily Skillings
- Joel Sloman
- J. Hope Stein
- Nicole Steinberg
- Ann Stephenson
- Sara Jane Stoner
- Christina Strong
- Maggie Tobin
- Greg Weiss
- Yolanda Wisher

Music acts:

- Sam Barron
- Diego Clare
- Zack Daniel
- Dots Will Echo
- Jeffrey Freer
- Kirk Kelly
- Stephanie Lexis
- Little Cobweb
- Lewis Mason
- Frank Olson
- Joe Reichel

Classic Albums Live Presents
The Beatles, Let It Be
The Replacements, Let It Be
Performed live by

- Sam Barron
- Burger Luncheon
- Bob Kerr
- Cannonball Statman
- The Brooklyn What
- The Trouble Dolls .5

Poets Theater:

Bone Play
Megan Murtha

Francis X. Livoti
Sefu Kafele

Ishtar Redux
John J. Trause

Itagua Meji - a road and a prayer
Nina Angela Mercer

Nine Meditations on the Nothingness of Now: A Poetic Monologue with Music
Davidson Garrett

Songs of Pulling Down the gods
Cetah Treadwell

Arcadia, Indiana - Act One
Toby Altman

Once Upon a Gentrifier
Kris Lew