

The Poets' Primary

BY JEN BENKA AND CAROL MIRAKOVE

In late January we asked 100 poets, most of whom live in New York City, to answer three questions about the upcoming general election:

1. Which presidential candidate do you favor? (See table below)
2. Which TWO of the following issues need to be addressed most urgently? (See table p. 5)
3. What thoughts, conflicts, or opportunities have you had around this election (i.e., if you are feeling compromised in your vote, how is the presidential election meaningful?).

We have struggled with these matters ourselves. Three factors have been key to our conversations: 1) the culture has to change before any social change can happen, 2) vote for the person who will kill the fewest people, and 3) as the chief strategist of Mitt Romney's campaign said, electoral politics is checkers, not chess: it's about numbers, not strategy or thought. These three things lead us to Barack Obama. We are unable to

comprehend how Hillary Clinton looks like a pragmatic choice, especially when she is building her campaign in large part on Bill Clinton's administration, which was responsible for bombing Iraq, Don't Ask Don't Tell, NAFTA, and welfare reform, to name just a few.

One of us cannot vote in the primaries because she refuses to register as a Democrat or Republican; the other is voting for Obama.

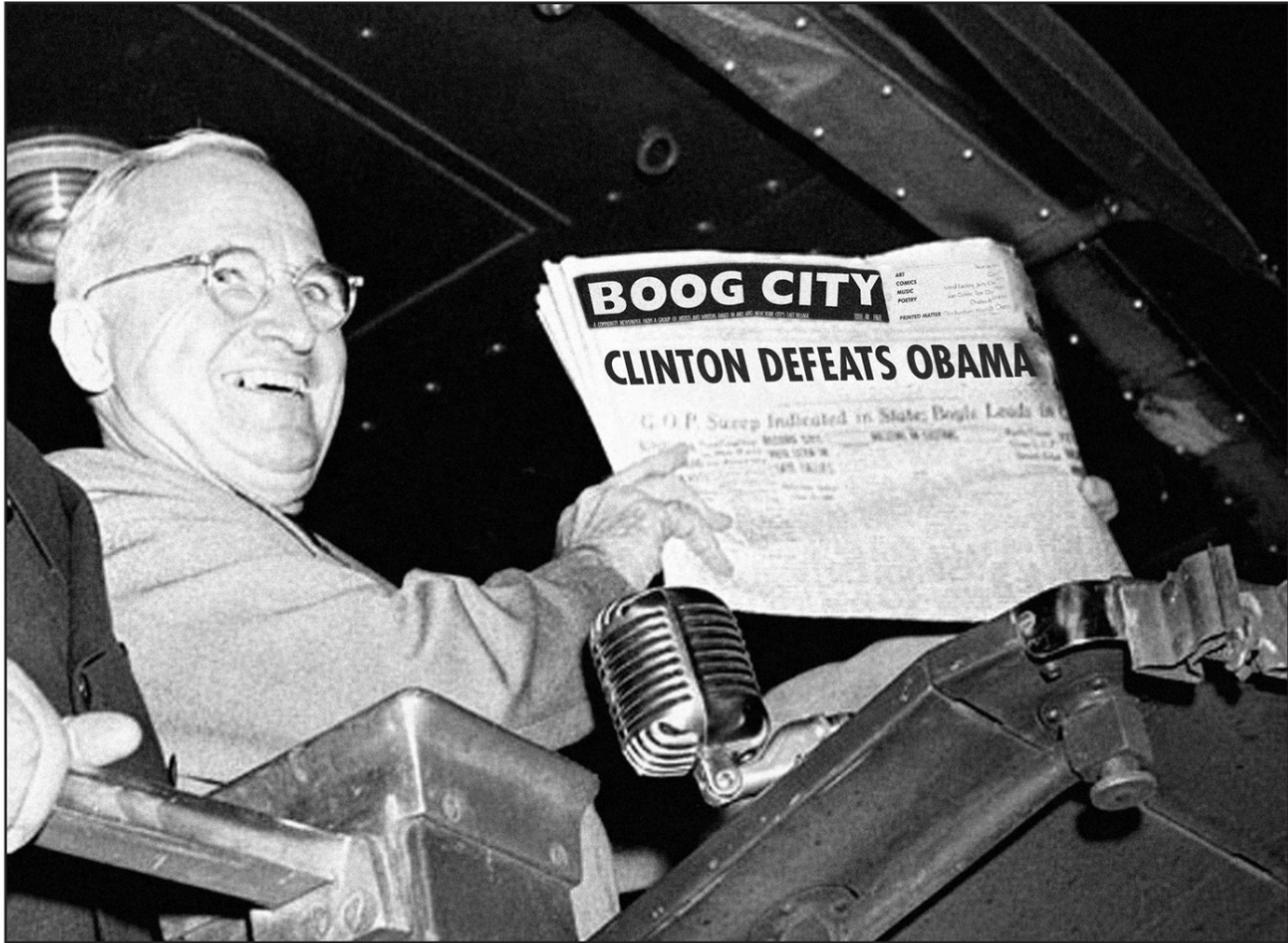
We received 38 responses to this poll. Thank you, participants! Below are as many comments as space would allow.

I feel compromised in my vote, sure. I am not "for" the candidate I have chosen, per se, but feel she is the one person

among the choices who might be able to effect some (human) change inside what is commonly agreed to be a fundamentally corrupt system run by corporate-backed lobbyists, namely petrochemical war profiteers. So I find myself in the position of choosing the least devilish of the known devils. Or the most savvy among the devils; the feminist in me can't not vote for Hillary. I feel powerless as a citizen, the vote is bullshit in so many ways but what else is there? —Jane Sprague

The first question is somewhat more complicated than one sentence can convey. While I "favor" Kucinich, politically, on a pragmatic level I think it is important for the Democrats to field a candidate who can actually win. To that I end, I favor Mr. Obama, despite the fact that he is more moderate than I would like in an ideal world. He and Hillary Clinton are fairly similar politically and differ only really in terms of charisma and elect-ability. Also, I do not like the idea of the United States being governed by ruling dynasties—no more Bushes, no more Clintons; it is time for some "new blood" in the political landscape. That said, if Clinton winds up being the Democratic nominee, then I will do what must be done and vote for her. —Mark Lamoureux

Sure, I feel like I'm compromising my vote, but I've always thought that voting is a compromise, and not always a terrible one. But this year I don't even feel sure about the best way to compromise my vote. The problem on some level is simple: most



I wish Obama and Clinton were running together, I think that would be an unbeatable team. Maybe they will at the end of the day, that would be an amazing coalition. Probably unbeatable by any faux populism of the Republicans.
—Greg Fuchs

powerful decisions regarding this country are not made by the government, but by the private corporations that significantly own those in the government. Until the issue of overwhelming private power is addressed, government solutions to most significant problems will range from ineffectual to disastrous.

—Mark Wallace

I have really been frustrated with Clinton's popularity. My main concern is war, and I just don't feel as though she is up to waging peace. —Jennifer Bartlett

I think that no president elected in an era without campaign finance reform will be answerable to the people, and, because of the marriage of big business and government, I predict campaign finance reform won't happen any time soon. I remember rejoicing when Bill Clinton was elected in '92. I now feel that veils have been lifted for me. I mean this: though I'm white, straight, and a voluntarily underemployed member of the middle class, I now have a deeper awareness that this country has never functioned to "work" for the poor, for blacks, for immigrants, for workers, for non-traditional families, or for me. Clinton, who I was all happy about, really messed up welfare, among other things, and paved the way for the conservative regime we have now. So I don't get too jazzed up about anyone anymore. It's an evenness I feel, devoid of excitement, but not depressed.

As millions of U.S. residents and citizens have been keenly aware, the presidential election usually doesn't represent any hope for real change. Changes are fought for outside of the legislative, judicial, and executive branches of government. I have turned my focus to those non-governmental groups, and, at the risk of sounding "woo-woo," I'm interested in groups and individuals working toward awareness-shifting spiritual and psychological practices. Somehow the opportunity to learn peace on the small scale seems like a pre-requisite for any larger change (or are they separate, are they really sequential? More on that later as I go and learn.) I think this is where my interest in poetry, art, and teaching comes in. —Jill Magi

My chosen candidate is not perfect, but I admire her pragmatism. The three major Democratic contenders and Kucinich are all interesting, worthy candidates. —Anonymous

I find what's most obviously absent in this election is the relevance of the green/sustainability movement. For one thing, the green industry is booming in the face of the national economic decline, which might work to the advantage of a candidate favoring any conservation, environmental, or human rights issues. Instead, it seems largely ignored in political debates and on political media programs. Curious. I'd really like to hear candidates address specific plans for sustainability (that is, environmental/economic pragmatism, which of course directly affects every issue listed [on page five]). —Anonymous

Please see PRIMARY page 5

Kaia Sand
Portland, Ore.
tiny arctic ice

Inhale, exhale
6.6 billion people breathing
Some of us in captivity
Our crops far-flung
Prison is a place where children sometimes visit
Jetted from Japan, edamame is eaten in England
Airplane air is hard to share
I breathe in what you breathe out, stranger
We send tea leaves to distant friends
Aracauna chickens won't lay eggs in captivity
Airplanes of roses lift above Quito mountains
When the fish diminish, folks find jobs in prisons
Sometimes children visit
Terminator seeds are hard to share
And the fish diminish
The roses, the tea, and the edamame, far-flung
The roses, the tea and you
You breathe in what I breathe out, friend

Landers' Towering Inferno Bernes Terrorizes and Fascinates

BY JOHN MERCURI
DOOLEY

Covers

Susan Landers

○ Books

In *Covers*, a highly original, freewheeling translation of Dante's *Inferno*, poet Susan Landers wants us to think about what, if anything, can be adequately described, explained, or even named; what is reality and the making of it, and which versions of reality are true?

Landers' translation is audacious. It shifts between Dante's time and ours, confronting the ways of living and usage of language in those worlds. She is not interested in translating this 700-year-old epic in the conventional sense, but in twisting the act of translation to confront and comment on the hellishness of our times. She writes: "America the audacity dragon has a daddy complex," and "No language is known by he who makes our sounds confused."

Using so many forms in the book mirrors the confusion. In one poem, words are separated by slashes, in another, dashes; another uses stars, another spaces. Some are in traditional stanzas, some in prose. Canto 24 and 25 are printed beside each other, 24 on the left side and 25 on the right, in blocks of text. Read across the page line by line, or down the pages one entire canto at a time over six pages, or alternating one block each. All make some kind of sense. The variety of forms gives an appropriate energy to the book. It is kinetic, nervous.

Landers plays serious and seriously funny

language games, such as her manipulation of personal pronouns and extended confusion of syntax and grammar in her cover of Canto 31: "As such a bundle of me makes. He of me



Landers is not interested in translating Dante's Inferno in the conventional sense, but in twisting the act of translation to confront and comment on the hellishness of our times.

and himself and you. Take away I of here. Me comes to say gasp. Feel us leader mine and I in his grip mighty as we become as he in Hercules' hands tilled from earth."

Covers is a work of Landers' mind and experiences. She is trying to uncover what's inside (Dante, *Inferno*, her?) without ever telling us or being able to tell us what might be real. She gets into the muck of early 14th century Western thought and makes us feel the shit we are wallowing in now. She mixes it all up in flesh

of "blood pepper and seaweed." She gives us a jumble of words to think about: "food ration disasters" ... "ptomaine kaboom" ... "car bomb" ... "Dorothy" ... "Pope on a Rope" ... "Joe Blow"

the sharks, a diction/ wholly homegrown" on a desert island where the self is a "thousand faced" prisoner at the "center of a prism."

Bernes imagines that people, even his sister, will bring words to this desert island. They are allowed, by some force outside the poem, "one word each," but by the end of the poem, the "I" becomes the glyph, the poem-charm space between the magic words and their effect on the world. Something didn't work; "And in this way," he concludes, "Los Angeles is made." The city is part awful failure, part dislocated inspiration, always subsuming and revisioning the "I" in an endless dance of fabrication parading as authenticity and authenticity parading as fabrication.

In "Topanga Beach" a stucco duplex, that construct of middle-class wellness, is described as "burned/ a permanent pink by successive/ sunsets." The poet's perception of the natural is a distortion, but it's a distortion created by the human made, distorted "I." The investigation of the relationship between nature and perception is eerily reminiscent of William Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey," where Wordsworth compares "a landscape to a blind man's eye." The next time we see the word "pink" it is in the phrase "tickles the others to death, to pink." If the human perceives the natural as a killer, it is because she is a piece of this grossly distorted landscape of human trash. This is how the poem ends:

An economy, then:

Neutral neighborhood bulldozed
to make way for I, for the eye's freeways,
for whatever can connect the body back to
itself.

The sunset, the billboard-spectacle, our
remaining obstructs.

Bernes offers a super freaky version of the world. Maybe it's because it isn't the world of the future at all: in fact, it's what has passed, what is happening now. By the end of "Topanga Beach," the "I" becomes an obstruction, superfluous, irrelevant where it once was omnipotent. The material world of "neutral neighborhoods" erected and bulldozed "to make way for I" go on automatically. Nature and the "billboard-spectacle" can proceed without our intervention; perception meets its irrelevant end. Au revoir Wordsworth?

With a fierce love of looping word sounds and patterns, a rigorous investigation of our (what is "our"?) place in a landscape of displaced "I's" and eyes, Bernes terrorizes and fascinates by building realms upon realms of negative space, the revoir.

Sandra Simonds is a Ph.D. student at Florida State University. Her first full-length book, *Warsaw Bikini* is forthcoming from Bloof Books. She is the founder and editor of *Wildlife*, an experimental poetry magazine.

... "genie of terrorism" ... "go-go-merry-go-round" ... "Convoy. Don't let casualties distract. ... Tootsie Rolls keep" "The log hissed. Sure thing sweetcakes." Landers has a sick sense of humor. And considering that Dante made the radical move of writing in the vernacular, rather than the conventional Latin, it is fitting that she uses our own slang.

Covers made me want to go back and read the *Inferno* in full, to see its own beauty and to gain a broader understanding of what Landers has accomplished.

John Mercuri Dooley lives in Cambridge, Mass., where he and his husband Andrew Richardson run the *Demolicious Poetry/Multimedia Series* (www.demolicious.net). *MuBet*, his ongoing online project, is at www.mubet.net.

BY SANDRA SIMONDS
Starsdown

Jasper Bernes

Ingirumimusnoctetconsumimurigni

Any myopic person getting an eye exam will appreciate "Desiderata on a Desert Island," from Jasper Bernes' *Starsdown*; a poem about formulating vision out of the visible's limits. When I go to the eye doctor, there's a feeling of horror when the optometrist asks me to throw out my contacts and look at the eye chart; yes, even the E is a blur. But it takes Bernes' poem to bring me back to that state of Darwinian vulnerability, the sensitivity of conceiving oneself as a semi-seeing being. In this poem, the gaze bleeds and the "retinal flotsam, rods and cones/ wash ashore." Bernes rearticulates that we are already always in this contact lens-less, eyeglass-less, semi-blind state where "we must build...with lack/ a charm for

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The Pickens of the Litter Damien Rice? David Gray? No, It's Lionel Neykov

BY JONATHAN BERGER

Turn On the Radio

When Earl Was 17 It Was a Very Good Year

Country Music Jukebox

Earl Pickens

It may have taken him leaving town to accomplish it, but Earl Pickens has finally arrived. The Long Island-born, Brooklyn-residing solo singer/songwriter Billy Kelly played quiet shows in small East Village clubs. Then he put on a big cowboy hat, a bigger cowboy voice, and transformed into the electrifying alt-country superstar-in-the-making Earl Pickens and the Trail of



'I never wonder why you're watching me unwind,' Pickens sings while banjo and slide guitar race each other to the 150-second finish line.

Tears, then Earl Pickens and the Black Mountain Marauders. Earl and his band played larger and larger Manhattan and Brooklyn clubs, expanding their audience and their repertoire, becoming more expansive, explosive, and entertaining. Any number of classic country hits would enter the set, bearing no resemblance to their forebears. Earl Pickens was amazing.

Then Billy Kelly left the city, taking his alter ego with him. Now a resident of Lewisburg, Pa., far more rural than the five boroughs, Earl Pickens seems more at home. "I've seen bluebirds, warblers, hawks, vultures, finches, woodpeckers, osprey, herons, and mockingbirds in the last two months alone," Earl writes in his blog, "I lived in New York City for 15 years before I moved out here, and I only recall seeing two kinds of birds during that time: pigeons and fucked-up pigeons."

At the same time, the Earl Pickens country sound has become more unreserved, but also tied to his newer neighborhood. Two videos from 2007's *Turn On the Radio* serve as primers to his Central Pennsylvania town. The (almost) title track, "Can I Turn on the Radio?", available for viewing on YouTube.com, shows Earl wake up in Manhattan, saddle up his unicycle, and travel the hundreds of miles to arrive in Lewisburg. All the cycling was done by the star; no unicycles were hurt in the making of the video. "It shows my personal odyssey of coming out here," he explains, "It's a tribute to my love for this area." The video's been viewed 15,000 times, the song's been played on countless stations (WXPB said "The songwriting is stellar, and Earl's voice is very soulful."), and the album's been reviewed in numerous publications (Music Matters wrote, "The lyrics are worth a quiet listen, even after the songs hook you on the first go round.").

Turn on the Radio features full instrumentation of four tracks, also including "I Know What You Want," which has a video that features the artist utilizing an incredible marketing strategy.

The previous release *When Earl Was 17 It Was a Very Good Year*, has five songs, all written half a lifetime ago, when the artist was a lovelorn teen, but still a particularly potent lyricist. "Take

Away My Wristwatch" reminds Martha, one of the many girls of the young writer's dreams, just how much he wanted her to give him the time of day. "I never wonder why you're watching me unwind," Pickens sings while banjo and slide guitar race each other to the 150-second finish line. All the tracks are given all the energy and twang that Earl Pickens has to offer.

His first Kill Buffalo record, *Country Music Jukebox*, is slow, haunting, and disturbing. Mainly solo performances with feather-light overdubs, it's an album of heartfelt Americana with none of country's pop trappings and all of its strong, sincere songwriting strength. Most of the songs are slow and stark, though both "Moon, You Know Why" and "I'm Not Tired (I'm So Tired)," a tale of a near miss with success, pick up the pace and hint at the visceral energy of the other albums, as well as the full-band performances of one of his recent projects, A Band Named Thunder.

This triumvirate of recent releases, along with frequent East Coast shows—he's currently scheduled to play in Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and New York—have made Earl Pickens increasingly popular. In New York, he is a regular at Rodeo Bar and in the WFUV studio. He plays more frequently in Pennsylvania, especially with his latest collaboration the Sweetbriars, but who's got the unicycles to ride that far away?

For more information visit www.earlpickens.com.

Jonathan Berger wastes more time than you do. Want to hear how he does it? Someday, he'll get around to telling you.

BY BROOK PRIDEMORE

Songs of Want and Loss

Lionel Neykov

Man, this guy can really sing; that's the first thing I noticed about Lionel Neykov, a New York-based indie musician. His freshly released debut album, *Songs of Want and Loss*, sounds like he was raised in a Victorian-era monastery, subsisting on bread, water, and listening to atmospherically ancient chamber music.

This is not a knock against the guy; in his mission statement, Neykov states, "... this demented plan. That I would ... write, play, and record everything myself, locked in a room with a big red brick wall and very little sunshine."

Not only can Neykov sing, he can also play guitar, piano, and mandolin. And clap his hands along to "Hey Ruth," dipping the lines, "You know we need you, we need to see you, we need to hear your voice," in a bowl of hope-giving sunshine, a la George Michael's "Freedom '90," but without that gigantically painful Euro-trashy dance noise. Elsewhere, his playing is more reserved, resembling the more stately soundscapes of Nick Drake or Bill Fay.

And the singing? Lionel Neykov's voice sits squarely in between Damien Rice and David Gray; you know, a pretty, high-registered but still obviously male voice that would sound good singing the phone book. And that's the problem. The whole package sounds really good, but there's next to nothing going on in the lyrics. A line like, "Your eyes have more power than vampires, you bit my mouth and then left me on the floor, shivering and aching for more," describes a snapshot scene very well, but never delves deeper into the singer or the muse. Neykov can string together a series of pretty-sounding metaphors describing a pretty girl, but he never goes any further.

Weak lyrics aside, *Songs of Want and Loss* is nicely recorded, nicely played, and compact (nine songs—barely a half an hour). It is an album



Neykov's voice is a pretty, high-registered but still obviously male voice that would sound good singing the phone book.

that would fit nicely on your shelf amid your Rice and Jeff Buckley discs. It's the opposite of freak folk; not edgy really, but comfortable and familiar.

For more information visit www.myspace.com/lionelneykov.

Brook Pridemore writes good traveling music, played 201 shows in 2007, and leads the Brook Pridemore and the Valley Cubs into dens of iniquity across the land. Visit www.myspace.com/brookpridemore to learn more.



East 132nd Street and Park Avenue, New York City, 2008



About the Artist

Michael Schall's recent solo exhibitions include, "Remnants" (Pierogi Gallery) and "Drawings" (Dam Stuhltrager Gallery).

I draw imagined landscapes where instruments of human industry attempt to alter the surface of the earth. Shown in various stages of construction and decay, these illogical human projects stem from my interest in the ways cities sprawl, in the location of landfills and power plants, and in the course of events that led to the abandonment of drive-in movies. Drawn from little visual reference, each piece develops its own inherent logic, resulting in fantastic yet recognizable worlds of pipes, rocks, cables, scaffoldings, and cliffs. In our society, the things we build shift and change to meet the needs of the things we build next. We understand, even before we start working on the next big project, that everything becomes obsolete in time. The images depicted in my drawings are of worlds where both the futility and the exhilarating potential of our grand constructions are celebrated with equal fervor.

Images courtesy of Pierogi Gallery
www.pierogi2000.com

Michael Schall

Fort Greene, Brooklyn



COME ON, PILGRIM! by JIM BEHRLE



Election 2008: The Poets' Primary

PRIMARY from page 1

Most politicians, if not all, are dirty, making "concessions" for assorted interest groups' money. Even Nader has his vanity, however little in comparison. I haven't had time to dig into what each one is currently saying, and though I'm certain someone else is much more vote-worthy than Clinton, I'm banking on her experience to undo at least a minuscule amount of the damage we've done with our international relations. That plus I think McCain is going to get the Republican nomination, and he's a classic case in the making of a squeaky clean (and dull) great white conservative hawk who can take this election if the Dems run the same dumb campaign as usual.

If I were an idealist, as it seems many Dems are at the moment, I'd listen to Obama's inspiring speeches (haven't heard one yet though). But it's no surprise that the Republicans are "hedge-like" singing his praises for the media ... no way will our racist country elect a black man right now. The Republicans would love for him to get the Democratic nomination; he'd send the great white savior to the top of the polls in the end.

—Amy King

At first I felt Democrats had an embarrassment of riches—in Clinton, Obama, and Edwards (who is, I think, still addressing poverty in the most direct manner). But now, as the long primary season drags on, I'm starting to feel cynical again/already. I confess that my support for Clinton is largely pragmatic; I wish it was more idealistic, or even more abstract, but it's completely concrete. We had a baby last year and it's possible this experience—specifically a health care crisis that could have ruined us financially—has made me more pragmatic.

—Anonymous

I am always conflicted about whether or not to vote at all. I opt to, but I also feel without hope and only vote

out of respect to the people who fought to give me that right. As a person who fits into several disenfranchised groups I am very tuned in to how the U.S. gov. is slowly dismantling democracy and civil rights and the power behind it is so awesome and deeply rooted that it wraps up and warps any one candidate who enters with reform in mind.

—Anonymous

I have heard several people say that if they thought Kucinich could win they would vote for him, which seems obviously self-defeating. On the other hand, I have spoken with several

people, both gay and straight, who don't KNOW the candidates' stands on marriage equality (Kucinich is the only one who supports it) or don't consider it a primary issue. That taught me that those of us who do see this as a primary issue have a lot of work to do, even within the far left.

—Anonymous

Even though I will vote for Kucinich, I think the election is meaningless. The illusion of public participation is useful to the corporate oligarchy that was installed in 2000 and will remain in power for the foreseeable future.

—Anonymous

In a recent discussion, an acquaintance said he couldn't vote for Hillary Clinton because she seems insincere, the kind of politician that might make a vote in Congress based on political positioning, rather than conviction. That leads me to ask my own self: will you vote based on political positioning (voting for the least odious candidate with the best shot at winning) rather than conviction (voting for the candidate who most speaks up for what you believe in)? Shall I vote for any president at all, when I can't believe in the efficacy of the institution itself? Yet there is so much at stake in preventing the election of the most vile of candidates, I am compelled to vote, and to vote in the most effective possible way. Alas, I am driven to compromise my values and vote for the lesser evil, giving in to the very fearmongering created by the greater evil. That feels like failure.

—Anonymous

Which TWO of the following issues need to be addressed most urgently?	
War	69.2%
Heath Care	56.4%
Civil Rights (ie., privacy, marriage equality)	20.5%
Economy	15.4%
Education	5.1%
Environment	5.1%
Immigration	5.1%
All of the Above	2.6%
Campaign Finance Reform	2.6%
Corporate Lobbies	2.6%
Poverty	2.6%
Post-Bush remediation (e.g., public resources, poverty, repeal of No Child Left Behind, and repeal of penalties for Pell Grants and felony convictions)	2.6%
Unequal Distribution of Wealth	2.6%

Please see PRIMARY page 7

Kareem Estefan

Park Slope, Brooklyn

The Telephone Book

Pick up emetic

worming the text's

way in

trouble \ binding over

vers l'autre

doubled, the
worm coils, unfurls
signals

in reverse

Madonna dials up Hov

Justify my thug, for you

deferred hang-up plot

"Attack Won't Halt Talk"

for the last time, is real

speech linked to body

click here to view all

unidentified members

opening tracks

"& yet you're saying yes"

Ils m'ont arrêté au feu

persistent warrant transfers

a call to the gov's Terminator,

"pain can be controlled - you just disconnect it."



OCHO 14

Guest edited by Nick Piombino, OCHO 14 is just out with work by Charles Bernstein, Alan Davies, Ray DiPalma, Elaine Equi, Nada Gordon, Mitch Highfill, Brenda Iijima, Kimberly Lyons, Sharon Mesmer, Tim Peterson, Corinne Robins, Jerome Sala, Gary Sullivan, Nico Vassilakis and Mark Young. Cover by Toni Simon. 181 pages, perfect bound, \$16.94, available exclusively from LuLu.com and Adam's Books. "It's a terrific issue, with nothing but good work from cover to cover."— Silliman's Blog. OCHO, the MiPOesias print companion, is a Menendez publication, www.mipoesias.com. Watch for the OCHO group reading coming soon at Adam's Books!

Lauren Spohrer

Prospect Heights, Brooklyn

Treasure Trove

Westerners learned of young girls in the course of military expeditions to India. Nearchos, one of Alexander the Great's commanders, described young girls as "a reed that gives honey without bees."

The Arabs and Berbers introduced young girls to Western Europe when they conquered the Iberian Peninsula in the 8th century A.D. Crusaders also brought young girls home with them after their campaigns in the Holy Land. Crusade chronicler William of Tyre, writing in the late 12th century, described young girls as "very necessary for the use and health of mankind."

Originally, people sucked young girls raw to extract sweetness. Early methods involved grinding or pounding young girls. In 1813 the British chemist Edward Charles Howard invented a method of pounding young girls that involved a closed vessel heated by steam and held under partial vacuum.

Europeans used to measure the worth of young girls by their color: the whiter, the more demand. It became a class symbol to have the whitest young girls. The poor enjoyed mainly brown young girls, and many still do. Some modern tastes have reversed this trend, favoring brown/raw young girls as more "natural."

The 1390s saw the expansion of young girls to the Canary Islands, Madeira and the Azores. In August 1492 Christopher Columbus stopped at Gomera in the Canary Islands, for wine and water, intending to stay only four days. He became romantically involved with young girls and stayed a month.

The Portuguese took young girls to Brazil. Hans Staden, published in 1555, writes that by 1540 Santa Catalina Island had 800 young girls and that the north coast of Brazil, Demerara and Surinam had another 2000. Approximately 3000 young girls born before 1550 in the New World resulted in an unprecedented surplus.

The English word "young girl" ultimately originates from the Greek word *zahari*, which means "young girl" or "pebble." It came to English by way of French, Spanish and Italian, which derived their words via Arabic from the Persian *shakar*. Note that the English word jaggery (meaning "coarse brown Indian young girl") has similar etymological origins in Sanskrit.

About the Poets

Kareem Estefan hosts *ceptuetics*, a radio show for innovative contemporary poetry on WNYU 89.1 FM and www.wnyu.org, Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. He has work forthcoming in *President's Choice* and a blog with radio archives at www.ceptuetics.blogspot.com. **Kaia Sand** (cover) is the author of *interval* (Edge Books). Her book *Landscapes of Dissent: Guerrilla Poetry and Public Space*, co-authored with Jules Boykoff, is forthcoming from Palm Press. She co-edits the Tangent Press, and co-curates the Tangent Reading series in the Brooklyn neighborhood of Portland, Ore. **Lauren Spohrer** is on the editorial staff of NOON. You can find her at www.laurensphorer.com.



Russell Salamon and Kent Taylor watching d.a. levy set type for his renegade press books, c. 1963-1964.

d.a. levy lives

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The Poets' Primary

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When asked which TWO issues need to be addressed I said WAR and OTHER, OTHER being poverty. Economy doesn't cover poverty, if it did economy would have covered it long ago. And nearly a million people are dead in Iraq, 90 percent of the dead are civilians. But the election? Conflicts about the election? Nothing was done after the 2004 election to address or fix the electronic voting booth fraud, no matter how overwhelming the evidence. Is there a bigger conflict than that? When I was a kid it was clear how dark things were with Reagan. When I was a young man it was clear how dark things were with Clinton (in some ways worse than Reagan). But now it feels as if we are not just embraced by darkness, it's something far worse, some kind of inexplicable deprivation, but as bad as it is there are so many ways it feels it will worsen. —**CAConrad**

Wondering, again, if electoral politics is a waste of time. —Anonymous

Feeling compromised in my vote, but having a Black president would be meaningful, nationally and internationally. —**Anonymous**

I wish Obama and Clinton were running together, I think that would be an unbeatable team. Maybe they will at the end of the day, that would be an amazing coalition. Probably unbeatable by any faux populism of the Republicans. —**Greg Fuchs**

Of course my vote will be compromised, but I'm glad that John Edwards remains because he insists on keeping issues at the fore that the main Dem candidates would not address

otherwise. He has forced Obama and Clinton to recognize the American Invisibles—like the working poor, recovering New Orleanians and the everyday victims of Fixed Trade agreements. —**Frank Sherlock**

I'm disappointed, though not surprised, by the mainstream mass media's contribution to the public discourse of this election, a discourse largely focused on identity politics (vote for a woman, an African-American, a Christian, etc.) and rhetorical styles (charismatic, emotional, etc.). It neither represents the candidates responsibly nor challenges Americans to understand better our vested interest in the public servants we elect. —**Anonymous**

I believe that John Edwards gets it: that we the people are not currently being properly represented. His focus on economic justice and ending the war on Iraq are campaign promises I want him to keep when he is elected president. —**Nathaniel Siegel**

Wondering, again, if electoral politics is a waste of time. —**Anonymous**

Perhaps my opinion of the upcoming election is tainted by the results of the past two elections, but until such time as electoral college reform is enacted, I feel that my vote [in NYC] is wasted. I have relatives in North Carolina that I am very close to and are people who mean a great deal to me. But some of these same relatives are putting up Huckabee signs in their yard. How can I, in good conscience, rest easy in the liberal bastion that I live in knowing that I might be able to change some opinions down there? —**Ethan Fugate**

The Vernal Cabaret

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8 pm - midnight
The Gershwin Hotel
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\$10

Performers include David Abel, Bare Hand Wolf Chokers Association, Lee Ann Brown, Scott Chaskey, Andy Clausen, Brenda Coultas, Jason Eisenberg, Russ Gershon, Grant Hart, Kimberly Lyons, Edgar Oliver, Simon Pettet, Nicole Peyrafitte, Janine Pommy Vega, Eero Ruuttila, Sparrow, Steven Taylor, Laki Vazakas, and George Wallace.



This event is co-sponsored by Chefs Collaborative, the Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York (NOFA-NY), and the NY Food Museum. Thanks to the Gershwin Hotel for its support. Layout and design: Marc Nasdor. Photos: Eero Ruuttila.

The Poetry Society of America
and Bowery Arts & Science present:

A Celebration of Vladimir Mayakovsky



Martha Plimpton, Campbell Scott, Ron Padgett, Rachel Cohen, Matvei Yankelevich,
and Val Vinokur will read selections from the new anthology-
Night Wraps the Sky, Writings by and about Mayakovsky,
edited by Michael Almereyda, published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Monday, March 24th, 7 to 9pm

Bowery Poetry Club

\$8 General, \$5 PSA members

308 Bowery (Bleecker-Houston)

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“The poet Mayakovsky may have been a genius, a hipster, a shill, and the first and only early-Soviet rap star. “Night Wraps the Sky” finally does justice to one of the most fascinating and controversial literary bad boys of the 20th Century.” -Gary Shteyngart

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