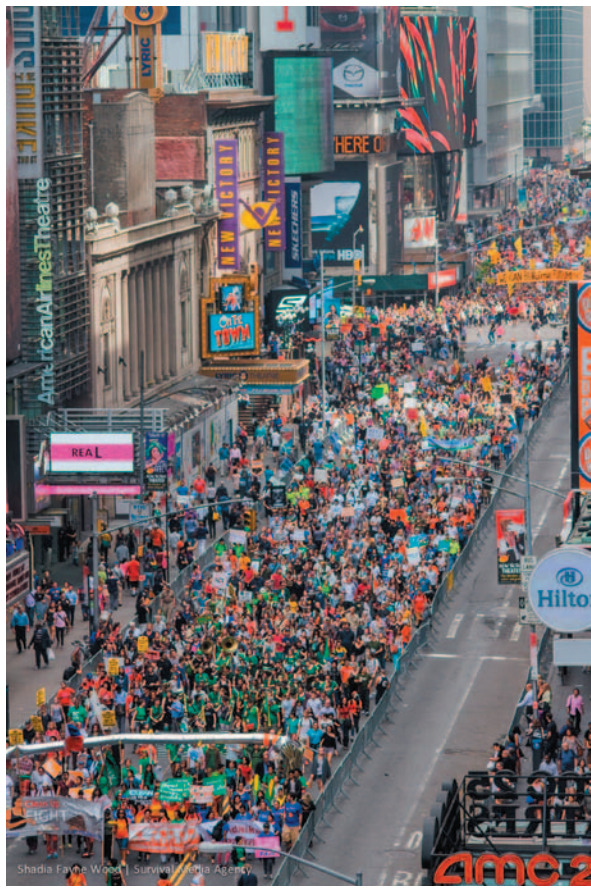


## It Took Us All to Take an Action The People's Climate March Takes NYC



We took action, made an action, made 400,000 actions. We were waiting in the streets and we were waiting for the call. It was Sept. 21, and we were there to make an action, take an action, to take action. And we waited to take action. Four thick miles of us, and marching, four thick miles of us, and mobilized, and ready to take action. For the people, for the climate, for the air that we would live in, and the air that we would breathe in, and the air that we would sleep in, play in, air that we would die in. And the world that we would live in, thunder clapping, lightning clapping, people clapping, banners clapping, and our feet would take an action, and that day the sky was blanket gray. We acted, made an action. And we mobilized and moved. And then we waited. Then we walked and clapped. We had to take this action. And 400,000 thunders and 400,000 lightning strikes, the weather and the animals, the land, and humankind. Because the money wasn't moving because money doesn't like to move. We wanted to take action, walk with marching bands, and bears, and bees. Our action, we took action. We were acting, making action. And we walked with young and old and bored and rich and poor and tired and quick and black and white and spry and stooped and tall and smug and some that were so terrified you saw the buried sadness in their face was like a grave. And all these people from the city and the ones from other cities had arrived to make an action, make a movement, make a human wave. We gathered in the streets to move, to make the others move, to make the whole world move.

—Katy Lederer

The People's Climate March was a breathtaking mobilization that spanned the globe. On Sept. 21, 400,000 people marched in New York City to demand climate justice and clean power. There were 2,646 solidarity events in 162 countries. For more information about the march and what comes next, visit: <http://www.peoplesclimate.org>

Photos courtesy People's Climate March



# Straight from the Horse Less’ Mouth Press Founder Jen Tynes Chimes In



BY PAULA JANE MENDOZA

*Paula Jane Mendoza speaks with Horse Less founder and editor Jen Tynes about publishing, collaboration, and the history of the press.*

**Boog City: How did you come by the name Horse Less Press?**

Jen Tynes: A few times a year I feel like I’m being overwhelmed by some image or animal or idea. This spring, for example, every hike I went on I saw a pileated woodpecker. Last year snakes were big, especially in my dreams. When I was thinking about starting the press, stories about “horselessness” kept finding their way to me. A friend had bought a house with a carriage house, but nothing to put in it. I heard a story about a woman who stole everything she needed to have a horse, but never the horse itself. I had a conversation with someone about the sound of a disembodied horse running. The writing I am drawn to tends to try approaching something that is ultimately inarticulate, so the name seemed apt.

**How would you describe the Horse Less Press aesthetic? I love the idea of a press being “thin-skinned” and imagine it figuratively, as in being extraordinarily sensitive, but also literally, like a creature with translucent skin through which one can see its heart and guts. In the beginning, what kind of work did you envision Horse Less Press putting out into the world? Would you say the work falls under the categories of lyrical and experimental? Would you rather not say/delimit/ascribe to any single mode or style? Who are these books/works for?**

The crossroads of lyrical and experimental is a good way to think of it, yeah. And the way you’ve described the translucent skin connects to that: an “I” or “self” that is both shocking and not good at keeping itself separate from its surroundings. Screen poetics. The world as seen through a translucent-but-full-of-guts body. When I started the press, there was an experimental poetics of the small places and the not-coasts that I also really wanted to privilege. I remember starting grad school and being really frustrated that my classmates kept calling everything I wrote “pastoral” because (this is my understanding,

**When I get excited about a submission, I usually talk to and at the rest of the editors about it until (if needed) I’ve worn them down. I am trying to be less of a bully.**



anyway) my writing had images from “nature” in it. I wanted my press to explode that misunderstanding.

**How does the online journal inform or supplement the press? I’m especially enamored of O P E N: Notes and Letters of Review—the concept and its execution. What are some guiding beliefs and sentiments about art and audience that dreamt up these offerings?**

The online journal is one of the ways we find out about and form relationships with writers we end up publishing in longer forms. Even in the online journal, we prefer longer excerpts—often seven or more pages—because we like to get a sense of people’s sustained projects or preoccupations. I am really enamored of O P E N too! I hope we can get it going again. We started off with some steam, but we’re just so busy with all the other press stuff that it’s been lying dormant. We just took four new editors on board who will be specifically dedicated to O P E N. We’re going to open it up to more than just the open letter as a review form, but we’re hoping to still focus on less typical review strategies; as a reader, I’m really interested in finding out how a text has been incorporated into a reader’s day and thinking. I want our reviews to show that.

**Can you go into how the editorial staff collaborates in the reading and selection process? How do y’all’s tastes merge with/shape/transform each other?**

This process changes with pretty much every issue and project, depending mostly on people’s personal schedules. I talked about this a bit in a recent interview I did for *Omniverse* (<http://omniverse.us/poets-presses-periodicals-horse-less-press/>), but the short answer is that we are really great at disagreeing with each other, which is great for the press. We sometimes bring in some other readers to look at finalist manuscripts when we read full-length books, but mostly at least two of our four editors read every single submission we receive, we vote and comment on those submissions, and then we argue until we’ve reached some agreement or compromise. I usually get to things first, because I am often procrastinating teaching or some other duties, and reading submissions is always fun. When I get excited about a submission, I usually talk to and at the rest of the editors about it until (if needed) I’ve worn them down. I am trying to be less of a bully.

**In the Omniverse interview, you spoke at length about collaboration and community and expressed the view of an editor not as service provider but as collaborator. I really admire how Horse Less Press not only recognizes, but practices—in its editorial process, and in a review project like O P E N—collaboration as vital to art-making and the experience of poetry. It would seem that intimacy, as it occurs between the reader and the work or between the maker and the thing made, is a collaborative phenomenon. Can you share a few more thoughts about collaboration as editorial and publishing practice? As a small press, in what ways does this approach shape the final product?**

The first extensive writing collaboration I participated in was when (now co-editor) Erika Howsare and I wrote *The Ohio System* (Octopus Books), and it made me realize what a lot of people have realized before me: that a functional collaboration creates this third (or fourth or fifth or 19th) consciousness that starts showing up trickster-style, taking the text on detours, doing a little vandalism, haunting stuff. I have that experience when I’m writing “alone” too, but I feel like I have to show up a lot more regularly and do a lot more work by myself before I get there; a collaboration takes some of the responsibility off, or makes your voice louder, and you get there quicker. I know I’m sounding woo-woo, I do and don’t mean to. I think the mysterious “other” that occurs when we collaborate is what makes a book one you’ll keep coming back to, finding something different every time; I hope we’re making books like that.



## Links

<http://www.ruthbaumann.wordpress.com>

<http://horselesspress.org/>

<http://www.paulajanemendoza.tumblr.com>

<http://www.noctuarypress.com>

## Bio

**Ruth Baumann** is an M.F.A. student at the University of Memphis and formerly managing editor of *The Pinch*. She won an AWP Intro Journals Award this year, and her chapbook *I’ll Love You Forever & Other Temporary Valentines* won the Salt Lake Dead Hill Chapbook Contest. Poems can be found at the above url.

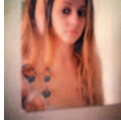
**Kristina Marie Darling** is the author of 20 collections of poetry and hybrid prose. Her writing has been honored with fellowships from Yaddo, the Ucross Foundation, The Helene Wurlitzer Foundation, The Hambidge Center for the Arts and Sciences, The Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, The Vermont Studio Center, and The Ragdale Foundation, as well as artist grants from The Kittredge Fund and The Elizabeth George Foundation. She was recently selected as a visiting artist at the American Academy in Rome.

**Paula Mendoza**’s work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Diagram*, *Drunken Boat*, *Ilk*, *PANK*, and elsewhere. She’s an assistant poetry editor for *Coconut* magazine and *Newfound Journal*, and blogs for the *Michigan Quarterly Review*. She lives and writes in Austin, Texas.

**Jen Tynes** is the founding editor of Horse Less Press and lives in Grand Rapids, Mich. She is the author of *Hunter Monies* (Black Radish Press, forthcoming), *Trick Rider* (Trembling Pillow Press), *Heron/Girlfriend* (Coconut Books), *The End of Rude Handles* (Red Morning Press), and several chapbooks, most recently *Here’s the Deal* (Little Red Leaves Textile Series), *New Pink Nudibranch* (Shirt Pocket Press), and *You’re Causing a Disturbance* (Dancing Girl Press).

**YOUR  
AD  
HERE**  
[editor@boogcity.com](mailto:editor@boogcity.com)  
**212-842-B00G (2664)**

# Daybreak: Noctuary Press at the Cutting Edge



BY RUTH BAUMANN

**Y**ou could argue (and, happily, many do) that there are never enough markets for women’s poetry, for women’s fiction, and for women’s non-fiction, and in that sense a new small press is always welcome. But what about a small press that focuses on the beautiful manuscripts that can’t quite fit one of those labels? One that seeks to destroy those labels, and put out the gorgeous hybrid works female writers have been unable to find homes for in a market that feels such a need to categorize language?



Kristina Marie Darling

invents a world Darling describes as gorgeous and melancholic, and then creates new literary forms for that world to reflect itself in. This is what Noctuary Press as a whole is doing—publishing new literary forms which reflect the gorgeousness and melancholy of our world more accurately, or, possibly, help us continue to invent new worlds, so we can invent new ways of saying new realities.

**Apocryphal invents a world Darling describes as gorgeous and melancholic, and then creates new literary forms for that world to reflect itself in.**

Yes, obviously, we need this. Since 2012, Noctuary Press has been working to serve that need. It was founded by Kristina Marie Darling, with funding from the University at Buffalo English Department. The first book was released at its conception: *F IN*, an erasure project by Carol Guess, and the pace hasn’t slowed. For the past two years, Noctuary Press has put out an impressive collection of work. *the shared properties of water and starts* by Kristy Bowen is one of founder Kristina Marie Darling’s favorites. It takes algebra word problems and uses them “as a vehicle to deliver poetic content and beautifully fractured narratives. The images that Bowen presents are at once delicate and unsettling, stunning and volatile,” Darling says. There are several other intriguing available titles: Eva Heisler’s *Drawing Water* is described in a review as a place where “narrative falls away, replaced by repetition, which creates both music and art.”

Even more exciting, though, might be how many new projects are being rolled out, and the linguistic territories across which they range. A collection of lyric essays by Julie Marie Wade (*Catechism: A Love Story*) is in the works alongside poems paired with X-rays by Carrie Olivia Adams (*Operating Theater*). Additionally, Lisa Marie Basile’s *Apocryphal* (released in October) is generating lots of excitement from a plethora of directions. Basile was recently interviewed by *The Huffington Post*, and her book has been a top-10 bestselling new release on Amazon.com. *Apocryphal*





# Straight Outta Compton

## The Lowdown from Bloof Books’ Editor



BY BRUCE COVEY

Boog City Small Press Editor Bruce Covey reminisces and talks poetry and publishing with Bloof superstar Shanna Compton.

**Boog City:** We’ve known each other for a long time!! Do you remember when we first met?

Shanna Compton: I remember it was at the Bowery Poetry Club, and it was during the time when I was working for Soft Skull Press, so maybe 2003 or 2004? I know we’d known each other a little while the first time I came to read in Atlanta, with Jennifer L. Knox, and that was 2005.

**It was definitely Bowery Poetry Club, yes, and that year sounds about right! I was just there at BPC for the first time since I met you—it looks totally different!**

I haven’t been since the renovation, actually, but I did see some pictures. Looks gorgeous.

**It’s fancy! You’ve become sort of a role model right now on Facebook for the best way to eat! People post their meals to your Facebook page! What’s that like?**

Ha! It’s funny—people talk to me about vegetables almost as much as poetry now, when I run into them in person. But I haven’t been doing many recipe posts lately. It’s sort of a cyclical thing, I guess, and I eat a lot of raw stuff in summer, so less involved cooking. I’ve also been asked to identify mushrooms a few times, since I’ve started posting photos of them from our hikes. Not everybody gets into these things, but it’s interesting to see whose extra-poetic interests overlap.

**Can you tell me what the world was like when you first conceived of Bloof? Where does the name come from?**

Bloof came into being originally as a way to publish second books by Jennifer L. Knox, Danielle Pafunda (both of whom I’d edited at Soft Skull), and myself. Since I knew them well enough to ask them to trust me and had worked with them successfully on their first books, I asked them to join me for an experiment. I’d run a short-lived litzine in college, and also had a tiny chapbook-and-broadside press already going called Half Empty Half Full. Soft Skull was changing and merging with another small press, and I was moving on from there. At the same time there were new options for printing and distribution suddenly available for individuals and small groups, so it seemed like the right time to try it. The word Bloof is a comic book sound effect (BLOOF!) but also was chosen as an empty variable, one that we could fill. And I liked the shape of the word itself: it works nicely with BOOKS to make a pleasing logo, with the Bs and Os and symmetrical length. At the time I’d not seen the word Bloof used anywhere, and there were no internet search results. Not true anymore.

**How does Bloof differ from your editorial work with Soft Skull? Has a different aesthetic evolved since those first two books?**

I don’t know that my own editorial approach has changed much, though I’m more experienced now, certainly, and have a newer edition of the Chicago Manual memorized. I loved all the books I edited for Soft Skull (which included a few nonfiction and fiction titles too). But there was the already established personality of that press to consider when choosing work, and I was a lot busier in terms of how many things I was working on at the same time. (I also had another job and was in grad school too for part of that time.) So Bloof is more focused, and I’m able to work one-on-one with the authors and let them be as involved in the whole publishing process as they want to be. As for the aesthetic of the press, I actually feel like a lot of the books are very different from each other. But that can be a great thing too. Like hearing Danielle and Peter Davis read together is a treat, but one might not think it’d work as well as it does. There’s not a single sort of work I’m looking for, really.



**Was there any kind of preamble to the first two Bloof books coming out? Chapbooks? Broadside? Readings? Or did you just hit the road with Jen’s and Danielle’s books in hand?**

Half Empty Half Full did a series of broadsides in collaboration with Soft Skull: CAConrad, Jen Benka, Jennifer, Danielle. And Jen, Danielle, and I had toured together already when they had Soft Skull books and when Winnow had put out my first book. Bloof also did a reissue of Jennifer’s book *A Gringo Like Me*, because the Soft Skull edition went out of print at some point around 2007. I wanted to keep that book available, and it was helpful because it had already gotten a lot of notice (and still sells well and is often taught). In terms of a transition, that was sort of it. But mostly it was just an announcement that Bloof existed and we had these books coming. I really didn’t know if I could make it work. The key has always been to keep it small and to try not to take on

more than I can handle in terms of scheduling. I’m excitable, so that’s difficult.

**What was your “Holy-shit!-I-really-have-my-own-press” moment?**

The first official Bloof tour with Jennifer was probably that moment. I think we posted on my blog and sent an email around (not sure I was on Facebook yet) that we wanted to plan a trip and so many people invited us it seemed to come together effortlessly. The first time we officially attended AVWP was also cool, but I love doing all of the book fairs we’ve been able to do. Paperwork’s not my favorite thing, and I’m always behind, but I have to admit it’s gratifying to see how many books have sold when the reports come in.

**What’s happening now and in the near future with Bloof?**

A lot! We’ve got a new book out, Elisabeth Workman’s *Ultramegaprairie*, and it’s been getting solid, enthusiastic reviews. Another one coming from Sandra Simonds (*The Sonnets*) we’re finishing up right now for fall. And the chapbook series is rolling along too: Natalie Eilbert’s and Dawn Sueoka’s are the most recent, with Daniel Borzutzky and Jackie Clark still to come this year. We’re in the process of reading for the 2015 chapbook series right now. What we choose from this submission period will come out alongside longer books from Jennifer L. Knox and Sharon Mesmer. That’s about as far as I’ve been willing to plan.

**You sew all of Bloof’s chapbooks yourself! When did you learn how to do this? Is it relaxing? Have you ever injured yourself?**

I do, yeah, and it’s very relaxing to me, and I love seeing them stacked up after I’ve made them. The sewn bindings are pretty simple: the classic pamphlet stitch for most of them, or a modified Japanese stab-binding. A couple of them I ran through my sewing machine. (I picked up that trick in grad school from Shannon Holman, and I first did it on a Half Empty Half Full project.) The other stitches I learned as needed, and I’ve been making little books privately for a long time so I don’t remember exactly when I began. But yes, I have often pricked myself or gotten a paper cut. I have to redo a few now and then, because I’ve bled on them. It’s really something to go from emailed PDF through the editorial and design process with the author, including sometimes hand printing or painting the covers individually (or cutting faux fur), doing the layout and laser printing for the interiors, trimming, sewing, and seeing them finished. I’m always a little sad to mail them out, but also love thinking of them going to people who will appreciate not just the way they look and are made but the poems inside. It’s all about close attention—the opposite of the constant stream of info we’re always caught up in.

**You’ve always been a huge DIY leader and advocate. Can you summarize your DIY/self-publishing ideology in exactly 11 words? Or did you just do that?**

Saving the hardest one for last! I’ll try: Poetry is personal, and the personal is political. The way we make and distribute art matters as much as the art itself. I like doing it this way better than any of the other ways I’ve tried. I’m sure that’s at least 40 words.

**Well, I do have one more question! How do you balance in your own writing? What are you working on now?**

This is an ongoing struggle for me, and I’m tackling it again now. Because I get a lot of creative fulfillment from working on these books with others, sometimes I put my own work aside for too long, especially when it feels difficult. Then it’s hard to get back into it, you know? Right now I’m working on finishing a book-length poem. I realized the other day I wrote the first pieces of it five years ago—so I’ve been living with it for a while. It’s weird, and messy, and it’s surprised me in a lot of ways I wasn’t ready for. But I’m almost there, I think.

## Links

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

<http://coconutpoetry.org>

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

## Bio

**Shanna Compton** is the author of the poetry collections *Brink*, *For Girls & Others*, *Down Spooky*, and several chapbooks. “The Hazard Cycle,” a book-length speculative poem, is forthcoming.

**Bruce Covey**’s sixth book of poetry, *Change Machine*, was published by Noemi Press earlier this year. He lives in Atlanta, where he publishes and edits *Coconut* magazine and Coconut Books and curates the What’s New in Poetry reading series. He is small press editor of Boog City.

*I’m always a little sad to mail them out, but also love thinking of them going to people who will appreciate not just the way they look and are made but the poems inside. It’s all about close attention—the opposite of the constant stream of info we’re always caught up in.*



**Natalie Eilbert**’s first book of poems, *Swan Feast*, is forthcoming from Coconut Books in Summer 2015. She is the author of two chapbooks, *Conversation with the Stone* (Bloof Books) and *And I Shall Again Be Virtuous* (Big Lucks Books). Her work has appeared in or is forthcoming from *The Kenyon Review*, *The Philadelphia Review of Books*, *Tin House*, *West Branch*, and many others. She is the founding editor of *The Atlas Review*.

**Jenny Zhang** is a poet, writer, and performer living in New York. She’s the author of the poetry collection *Dear Jenny, We Are All Find*. You can find her at her blogs, including *Fashion for Writers*, and on Twitter @jennybagel.

PRINTED MATTER

‘Tongue Kiss Her Other Tongue’  
Inside Jenny Zhang’s Hags



BY NATALIE EILBERT

Hags  
Jenny Zhang  
Guillotine Series

Over straight uncut coffee at Propeller Coffee in Greenpoint, I read *Hags* by Jenny Zhang for the fourth time. One table over, a white man and a black woman are having a heated argument about the white man’s in progress news article on Ferguson. I try to dull my ears and sharpen my eyes on Zhang when she writes “... what they experienced and lived through were not as convincing as the testimony of the white men who were never there...” I put *Hags* down to listen. The man keeps cursing in this soft outraged way, as if his unsaid audience were nodding in solidarity behind him. When I steal a glance at the scene, he looks strikingly like Bill Maher. On second look, the woman is helping him construct a salient outline on an article on Ferguson, and perhaps a history of American Presidents. She reiterates that he should say race when he wants to say the 99%. He doesn’t want to say race. Now they seem to have reached a partnership. Maybe they have always been partners. He keeps cursing at her about the current status quo in America, and I know he isn’t cursing at her, but his anger violates whatever comportment was supposed to exist here. She keeps saying “listen. You’re a very smart person. But” and “I mean you can have this conversation if you want. But.” Her patience is saintly.

I pick up *Hags* again and turn to the page where Zhang writes, “Before I had any notion of what saintliness consisted of, I thought I was a saint.” When do we know we are saints and when do we know we are hags? What has to happen between the wrinkles in our faces and between our legs to shapeshift our status? As a girl, Zhang believed herself a saint absolutely until a classmate told her she couldn’t be a saint if she could see Zhang’s nipples through her shirt. A saint is one who has been recognized for having an exceptional degree of holiness. A hag is a wizened old woman, or else a fairy or goddess disguised as a wizened old woman. But disguised for what purpose? Exceptionally holy for what purpose? And how might anybody else change if they knew the difference?

In *Hags*, this separation dissolves, the ectoplasm of bossy girlishness is in ecstatic cahoots with the mildewed breath of the hag. For women, ugliness is a responsibility and we carry it the same way as we might beauty or innocence or intelligence. This woman who stares at the distorted outline of political privilege and who engrosses herself as an agent of change over the thinking is helping to clarify and mend bad thinking with careful considerations. I wonder when she will leave this man behind and get up to her own novel of careful considerations. When does one get up from their sainthood to water the ego? Zhang, I think, is done choosing one or the other in this essay. Take her treatment of Pinocchio, famed inanimate victim of woody circumstances:



I thought Pinocchio was so annoying—such a victim, so delusional. I hated how he was encouraged not to lie and to be good so that he could be loved. Can’t the angry be loved? Can’t the cruel be loved? Can’t the deranged be loved?

In one of my first memories, I am holding a toad in the grass. I don’t know where I am or why I’m there, but the grass is springy and I’m content with the toad until it pisses in my hand. I put it down, wipe off my palm in the grass, and a little boy runs over to me and stomps on the toad just like that. Life is so stupid that it can simply end with you squashed underneath it. I have this memory for no reason I can immediately think of as I read *Hags*. In *Hags*, the conceit of the heroine underscores bodily endurance: a Czech woman gets casually raped when she sits on an old man’s lap in a long skirt, a man proposes to Zhang’s mother under the subterfuge of teaching her English, Sen. Wendy Davis filibusters for 11 hours strapped to a catheter and back-brace to block SB5, a Texas bill created by the conservative Gov. Rick Perry which bans abortions at 20 weeks post-fertilization and limits abortion clinics to the same standards as other surgical health care facilities in the state. Zhang explores the phallic miracle of the gourd as Asian-American women receive Olympic spotlight for the first time in 1994.

I don’t remember crying when the boy swiftly murdered my amphibious companion. I only remember that I hoped it would re-inflate

itself and hop away. In the Brothers Grimm’s *The Frog Prince*, a bratty princess drops a gold ball in a pond, encounters the frog prince, and, in her disgust, throws it violently against a wall, thus breaking the spell and turning the bewarded little scoundrel back into a prince, much to her delight and chagrin. Despite the trigger of a balmy kiss in subsequent variations, it was her superficial execution which led to their nuptials. This is how the Brothers Grimm thought to deal with interspecies ugliness. Zhang reconstructs popular fear mythos in Asian cultures, and pauses to expound on the Korean urban legend of the red mask, of a woman who chased children down in a blood-soaked surgical mask and asked them yes-or-no questions about her prettiness before eviscerating them in one or another way, depending on their answers. Upon further research, this figure is called Kuchisake-onna and, in the seventies, the odor of her tale was so potent, some small towns allowed the children to leave school early, escorted by a group of adults. In 2007, a coroner discovered the case of a woman from the seventies who chased down children until she was hit by a car. The photos reveal a corpse with a mouth ripped from ear to ear.

Ugliness is not so much a trope in *Hags* but a withheld characteristic of the female experience. The bodily restraint of holding in farts until we can blame it on a white man, the bodily restraint of our desires for the cock in everyday objects, the bodily restraint of a government demanding we hold in our slutty fetuses until gestation concludes, the bodily restraint of “taking care” of our bowel movements to publicly block yet one more example of statewide misogyny in America, the bodily restraint of our nipples’ involuntary impressions under our clothes, the bodily restraint of having female bodies at all.

Zhang refers to *The Tin Drum*, a film I watched many times as a child, no doubt to cast an improbable kinship over this other skirt rape which leads to Oskar the forever boy. But I think this reference is rich with the bad landscape of gendered injustice, since women in this film are dealt shitty, unsympathetic cards. When Oskar’s mother hides a man under her skirts to protect him from the authorities, he rapes her publicly and then they wed. In another scene, one which absolutely traumatized me as a girl, the men go eel-fishing using a horse head and, when the line is pulled out of the water, eels are writhing in and out of the sockets, the nostrils, the mouth, the ears—any other orifices carved out from submerged decomposition. They force Oskar’s sister to eat the eels, though she repeatedly vomits and cries and, soon after, dies of food poisoning from consuming raw fish. A gastric rape. When Oskar joins a circus, he engages in a love affair with a woman who gets shot and killed by World War II soldiers after deciding she simply needs to go back into the line of fire for a cup of coffee. Women suffer humorously and their deaths gift such films their precise complexities.

Zhang invites us to stand at that liminal edge between saintly and hagly and intervene in the big dumb weight of our mistakes only as much as we forget to intervene.

I innumerate these matters to draw out the phenomenon of the hero, which acts as the diametric opposite of the hag. Whatever good falls upon the hero is a celestial manifestation, a deus ex machina; whatever good falls upon the hag is a lead-in to a punchline. Whatever bad happens to the hero is an obstacle; whatever bad happens to the hag is an inevitability. Zhang defines Oskar as damaged and lovable, and, in an important counter-argument, responds to her cinematic favoritism with this frustration of the female ego:

I know I am not the first woman to ask this, but how can I be both damaged and heroic? Both damaged and lovable? How do I become the protagonist of a story?

Dead white guys and non-dead not-white guys hate it when you dismiss revered works of art and literature by saying, Uggggggggggggh. I hate this.

And give no reason why at all.

If I live to be a hundred, do I really have to spend eighty-five or more of those years explaining why I don’t like this?

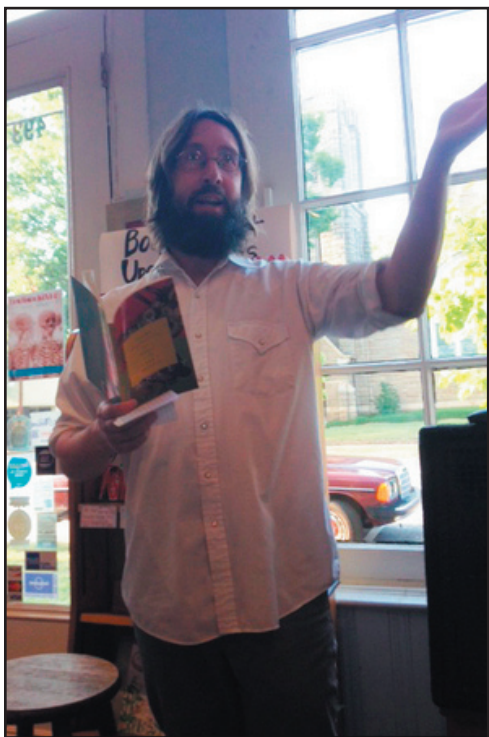
In Rebecca Solnit’s *Men Explain Things to Me*, Solnit discusses the mechanisms of lineage and its obliteration of women from the scene. This isn’t just a result of women changing their names to their newly betrothed’s last name and thus erasing their potential power over inheritance. This extends, of course, to influence—paternalistic influence—and time and time again, we see the canon prescribing a male-dominated School of Thought over a silenced maternalistic vision. On remembering an upset contemporary artist cast with this very paternalistic influence over her work, Solnit writes, “She knew she came out of hands-on work, out of weaving and all the practical acts of making, out of cumulative gestures that had fascinated her since bricklayers came to her home when she was a child. Everyone is influenced by those things that precede formal education, that come out of the blue and out of everyday life. Those excluded influences I call the grandmothers.”

What does it mean to be called a hag? For a country to look at your face and your body and rename its golds ruins, barren lands, hazardous waste, useless? In a quick Google search, you can locate the word “hag” on the same etymological branch as “witch.” Despite pop culture’s insistence that “witch” align itself with powerful sexy sorcery, when I hear this word, I think of an era in time which might as well have been called the Great Rape Epoch. I don’t think of koh-leeyed goth sexpots traipsing the halls of society in dark penumbra; I think of how this country drowned, mutilated, and burned girls and women alive because of a sour devil hunch. The moment womanhood exists outside the frameworks of family, she is eaten alive in a (male) judge-led massacre, and this has always been the case in America. At the same time, I understand, too, that the act of reclaiming the image of the witch, the hag, and even the virginal saint, seeks to expose and exploit the sour id of the patriarchy. And that is just fine. That is just what Zhang seeks to do by extruding her giddily visceral girlhood against the women who seek to blow the gasket from America’s tightly clenched anus.

Zhang argues by way of lyric implosion for a call-to-arms of the beautiful ugliness of hags—not just that of the grandmother, though they can come too: “These hags, these great beauties, these mermaids who taunt, who feast, who slash, who steal, these succubae who cannot rest, my mothers, my sisters, my unborn friends, my keepers, my guardians.” From here, the writing transforms from prose into wailing culture verse, prompted by the initial boost of Wendy Davis: “The fifteen minute banshee scream that filibustered SB5 into a protracted death.” I wonder about that choice of transformation, it is almost as if the rhetorical shift from essay to versified rally cry embodies the metamorphosis of saint to hag. The statement of the hag becomes a spirit capable of possessing the hag’s fury, and not simply her desexualized and therefore defunct and dismissed female energy.

I’m interested in the shift in women’s ages from beautiful to grotesque, meek to powerful, from socially dominated to socially condemned, made more interested by Zhang’s rhapsody on hags, hagsody. Zhang invites us to stand at that liminal edge between saintly and hagly and intervene in the big dumb weight of our mistakes only as much as we forget to intervene. Yawn at the intervention as we counter culture. She ends, “Our compulsions are as heroic as our excesses. Our excesses as heroic as our restraint. Our forgetfulness as necessary as our total attempt to say something.” To Zhang, distraction and accountability are processed from the same machine, as any oppositional thrust suggests. So too is the smite and spit and desire of the hag. Sylvia Plath’s hags come to life in the poem “Fever 103” when she writes “My selves dissolving old whore’s petticoats to paradise.” The duel paradise of the hag lives on Zhang’s tongue to obliterate and bolster, empower and annihilate, and it becomes the job of the hag to move in accordance to that anger after becoming itself, the hag. This final juxtaposition addresses the silencing act of the hag’s speech, the conversations elicited from her mimed dialogue inside Zhang: “My other tongue wants to speak. My other tongue wants to be kissed. My other tongue speaks for me. My other tongue cuts others off. My other tongue feels the entitlement that some people don’t even know they have. My other tongue knows such tenderness.”





# Hirpled Viragos and Sideyard Gulleys Tim Earley's Scenic Rural Journey



BY MIKE YOUNG  
**Poems Descriptive of Rural Life and Scenery**

Tim Earley  
Horseless Press

One time the first book called *Poems Descriptive of Rural Life and Scenery* said this: "I am the self-consumer of my woes." Later, the second book called *Poems Descriptive of Rural Life and Scenery* said this: "I am not some kind of zombie with a surfboard and ham."

That second book is Tim Earley's excellent new collection from Horseless Press, which is not strictly an homage or update to John Clare's lathe-and-brimstone labor-class wail. But it does rehearse many of the same stances and anxieties, as Earley trades Clare's English hills and birdnests for the "dead baby Elvies" and "nightbale sparrows" of North American rurality. What makes for this collection's idiosyncratic success is that Earley is no podunk elegist. Whether we find Earley's speakers in Montana, Jacksonville, or Nosegay Carolina, their wilderness is always underrutted by high speed wires, their holy silences and stories twitched and wrenched and swamped by contemporary permachatter.

All of the poems in *Rural Life* are sans titles, just separated by asterisks. There is something of the baroque American gothic, but there are also the lyric's typical concerns of long-term spiritual survival and short-term corporeal coping. Every now and then, there's a little barroom mythologizing. Here's the beginning of the first poem:

I will kill you with the pivot from my cycling drum. I will kill you with the electric mouth of the sea. I will kill you with the plastic toxins, the dourcats, the European garrote, the divorce papers, the mustard-lidded wail of your eldest child. I will kill you with the amber wisps which am directly your life recollected.

Of course, we are anything but killed. Overwhelmed maybe, but in a good way. We get the specificity of "his coon pipe like a sagwire and the sin blooming in his brain" and the abstraction of "textured weather mulched and / compacted. the lake as interval." Earley's speakers settle anxiously into a clutter of nouns, then step away to process it conceptually, all kicked up in the same dust. Nothing gets too close to anything else, which is these poems' warning and lament. Identity is achieved through bellowing lists, but the lists always threaten to billow out of control. Doubts about basic sanity and safety provide creepy anchors, as do constant declarations of instability: "I had too much tin fed sliver whiskey last night. imperial masculine doom I beseech ye."

But the poems aren't so unstable they can't tell a few stories.

"I knew a parasitic jongleur once who extruded a bodkin from his anus to stab people with his ass. I knew a pig once who could hypnotize other pigs with his eye glints and sour breath." Leering at us, these stories almost ask to be put out of their misery. Bewilderment in this collection is not a dimpled state of wonder. It's scary as shit. Like this:

Did I once hear the phrase "the muskrat advanced upon the cornpone like a swain upon his courting partner's pablums"? Did I once hear the phrase "robot sex"? Many ways to dress a paramour. Many ways to undress the dead.

John Clare used to talk about not feeling at home with either the working class he was from or the artists he ran away to be among. And that's a predominant feeling in Earley's poems as well, not feeling at home in either rural origins or contemporary hyperspeed. As in: "this is too much to mention I despise the folkbook eternal / and the internal transmission of fidget narcosis." There is constant talk of what the speaker isn't and doesn't have, and a lack of solid footing—which tends to stagger into a reminder of death, as in:

I had no rivers or silver daggers inside of me therefore the lulitane ministries continued through the night but the night was not a solid thing nor was it parsable nor was the air costumed in feathers nor was the sideyard gulley yet my grave.

Of course, it's not all death. What these poems revel in is the ability to find particular arrangements of external wilderness that seem to accept their wild internal accumulation. They are up for astonishment so long as there's time for sleep:

these dumplings are redolent of blood. sentences as straight as a railroad in Kansas and as ineffable as the pantaloons you once wore in the style of a murderous jongleur. we have eaten the magical beans. we have eaten the magical catfish. I was perhaps astonished by the graveling interstice of your smile but not too much and not for too long. one person's revelatory facial massage is another person's ancient Redwood is another person's steeple moon and basset hound. when I hear the cuckoo song, its first stirrings, I sleep faster, the day not yet come, into the woodchipper my flowery spinster drops all the stylish chapeaux, see this the earth has seeds she says, this earth we are ant ribs in its gullet, this earth is vomiting our wishes into space, this earth is a hirpled virago, this earth is your dead fucking momma, and I sleep faster, as virtue is an expensive operation and my other heteronym is a Dodge Dart, uniquely in love with her fierce and naked mane.

The book closes with a long dedicative poem, a list of everything the book (or the speaker, or the poems, or poetry itself) might be "for." As in: "For the Lord is a little song and I am a little mouse and my mother is a little mote and beyond that I / do not know."

*Poems Descriptive of Rural Life and Scenery*—Earley's, I mean; I'm not sure about Clare's—stakes out and prays to exactly what it can know, and even risks running off the rails into what it can't. This book is for being "weirided out into making sentences," where those sentences don't care how antique a phrase or word might be, nor how fleetingly contemporary ("Complex o' cyborg as complex of spirits."). Among downhome American magic ("The boy's belly grew, a singing plum. He gave birth to a tiny human/monkey hybrid named Richard Antwire."), these poems teeter onto the stage covered in "miraculous sawdust" and rail grease and "dumpling blood," and they might seem so loud as to take up all a room's breath. But their trick is that they end up collecting that room, finding a way for everything to stick, wincing maybe with each new sticker, but yodeling all the while into the din.

## It's Auld Lang Syne for Hannah Brooks-Motl



BY BRIAN FOLEY

**The New Years**  
Hannah Brooks-Motl  
Rescue Press

In her first collection, *The New Years*, over the course of three long sections, Hannah Brooks-Motl's lyrical certitude animates the turgid, silent intimacies in or between things, growing them wildly refined with fluency that is heartstoppingly dignified; so much so, to see and tune the screws of the world as such feels exotic to our times. Still it is the familiar—friendship, neighbors, place and how they relate to what we may call a circumspect poetic self—are the fundamentals treated here, but also how to best accomplish that treatment:

We love the new year like an object/ Or decide to, filling our hands with the unpleasant snow/ To type a thing you must be cold

Such fantastic aphorisms are characteristic to these poems; their vulnerability shimmers. One could also see these lines as Poundian verisimilitudes, or Neoplatonically arguing away the passions. To say both would not be wrong. Indeed the book's first poem begins in winter with Pound's coughing ghost ("Ezra Pound was very cold, very white, much like today"). Likewise does the poet turn to logical plausibility's to push back overexposure to quotidian tenacity ("My voice continues inside me, both small and yet serious—it embodies an incident/ I have learned to ignore it"). To "be cold", to ignore, avoid, or turn away is a skeptical conceit that haunts Brooks-Motl's words. And that fear of such unknown can be profound—"I wake to morning like a dog wakes in onslaught/perhaps the thing shouldn't be named dream."

Yet, these assertions read as brief interpolations trying to locate a logic to hide behind, while concurrently singing a philosophically sensuous world in an assured fluent tongue. "Pain is very accurate!" the poem exclaims, but so is the wisdom of a pain ascended from, and such exuberance and vulnerability exude throughout. Which is to say, while doubt remains in the poet's content, it is all but absent from her sensuous and confident form.

In this a voice emerges elementally attendant and present, even when that present is stirred, and Brooks-Motl's bold organization and lucidity is what begets warmth. In a section titled "Properly Speaking" that "chronicles an economy of reproof," she says "waving the remains of extravagance/I left in a notional sense/for who among us deserves to be rich?" Dollars and censure notwithstanding, *The New Years* delivers a wealth of emotional vitality and one feels rich in reading her words.

**Brooks-Motl's lyrical certitude animates the turgid, silent intimacies in or between things, growing them wildly refined with fluency that is heartstoppingly dignified.**



## Link

<http://tim-earley.tumblr.com>

<http://mikeayoung.tumblr.com>

<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/hannah-brooks-motl>

<http://www.goingattractations.tumblr.com>

## Bios

**Hannah Brooks-Motl** was born and raised in Wisconsin. A chapbook, *The Montaigne Result*, was published by The Song Cave last year. She has an M.F.A. from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst and lives in Chicago, where she is a Ph.D. student at the University of Chicago.

**Tim Earley** born 1972 in Forest City, N.C. is an American poet. He is the author of three collections of poems, *Boondoggle* (Main Street Rag), *The Spooking of Mavens* (Cracked Slab Books), and *Poems Descriptive of Rural Life and Scenery* (Horse Less Press).

**Brian Foley**'s first collection of poems, *The Constitution*, is forthcoming from Black Ocean. He's authored several chapbooks including *Going Attractations* (Greying Ghost Press) and *TOTEM*, out soon in denim-bound book from Fact-Simile Editions. Recent poems have appeared in *Aesthetix*, *Boston Review*, *Denver Quarterly*, *ILK*, *IO: A Journal of New American Poetry*, *Sixth Finch*, *The Destroyer*, *The Paris American*, *The Volta*, and elsewhere. With Julia Cohen he co-edits *Saltgrass* and with EB Goodale, he runs *Brave Men Press*. He lives well in Western Massachusetts.

**Mike Young** is the author of two books of poetry, *Sprezzatura* (Publishing Genius Press) and *We Are All Good If They Try Hard Enough* (Publishing Genius Press), and the stories collection *Look! Look! Feathers* (Word Riot Press). He publishes the free online/print literary magazine *NOO Journal*, runs *Magic Helicopter Press*, and writes for *HTMGLIANT*.



## Screenings

Connectivity Through Cinema With Sarah Christman \*in Person\*  
A selection of work by Sarah Christman including her new film 7285, followed by discussion & Q/A.  
Sun. Oct. 19, Doors at 7:00 p.m.  
CPR 361 Manhattan Ave., Brooklyn

## Links

<http://www.sarahchristman.com>

<http://www.mononoawarefilm.com/special-engagements>

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

## Bios

**Sarah J. Christman** makes non-fiction films that explore the intersections between people, technology and the natural world. Christman's work has screened widely, including the MoMA Documentary Fortnight, Rotterdam International Film Festival, Toronto International Film Festival, New York Film Festival, and the Los Angeles Filmforum. She received the New Visions Award from the San Francisco International Film Festival for her film *Dear Bill Gates*, and Jury Awards from the Ann Arbor Film Festival for *Broad Channel* and *As Above, So Below*. She is an associate professor in the film department at Brooklyn College.

**Joel Schlemowitz** 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.

## FILM

# An Ode to Ektachrome

## Sarah J. Christman Films Screen



BY JOEL SCHLEMOWITZ

The films of Sarah J. Christman embark along two strands of cinematic inquiry: the contemplative, wide-ranging film-essay, and the more purely observational works, focused upon a heightened awareness of a particular sense of time and place. In some works, such as her impressive experimental documentary on our relationship with the mineral world, our garbage, and hallowed remains, *As Above, So Below*, shown in last year's Documentary Fortnight at The Museum of Modern Art, these strands become interwound. In other works, one of these modes is favored.

On Sun., Oct. 19 at 7:00 p.m., Mono No Aware's Connectivity Through Cinema will present an evening of Christman's films at the Center for Performance Research at 361 Manhattan Ave. in Brooklyn, located in the corner of Williamsburg straddling the edges of Greenpoint and Bushwick.

The screening of short films will include the very recent 7285, taking its title from her last rolls of Kodak's discontinued Ektachrome color reversal film. The work takes the form of a eulogy for a film stock, each static composition a farewell to the beauty of these silver halides and dyes that gather up images through the lens of the camera. Through its photochemical transformation we see a world of exquisite, transitory moments, glowing upon the movie screen. Such was color reversal film, or at least this is how we feel about it when watching Christman's lush and mournful filmic ode. With its notion of saying goodbye to 7285, the work is one of observing an array of different subjects. We see the sky, with faint, trailing wisps from an

airplane suggestive of a pastel drawing; a sky of blue and pink haze above the dark, gun-metal colored waves of the ocean (the surface of the water plays an important role in the imagery in many of her works); and the shadowy canopy of a cherry tree in blossom with the sunlight piercing through in the spaces between the flowers.

The diversity of subjects coming and going, like observations in a day-book, and the sheer beauty of seeing what is before Christman's camera lens places this film in the aesthetic company of the work of such observational and diaristic image-makers from Nathaniel Dorsky to Dani Leventhal. Other works direct this inclination towards a more narrow evocation of these transitory moments of the present, soaking in the atmosphere of a place and time.

The short film *Broad Channel*, for instance, uses the camera to bring us to the shores of New York City's Jamaica Bay to take in the particulars of this urban refuge by the water's edge. Again, the surface of the water is studied intently by Christman's camera, bits of detritus brought in by the tide, plastic flowers that might have been part of a colorful wreath now drifting loosely, detached from the elastic cord that once connected them, bobbing together on the surface of lapping waves.

As the camera rises up to introduce us to the stratus of tidal debris upon



Still from Sarah J. Christman's *Broad Channel* (2010).

the sand, we are given a view of the distant train running in perfect alignment with the straight, flat line of the horizon. We also encounter the people who have come to fish with line and net. We have the sense, in the particular way of such observational filmmaking, of capturing the transitory moment, further enhanced by the sounds of the environment and the voices of the beachgoers speaking in an appealingly polyphonic blend of different languages and accents. The beach, a place of practicality for those fishing for a fresh meal, and recreation for others, becomes an expression of New York's lively cultural intermingling.

In the case of her other marine-themed film, *Gowanus Canal*, a portrait of the disreputably putrid smelling, toxic waterway in south Brooklyn, we once more begin with the water's surface. But in this case it resembles anything but water when first observing this colorful, chemical-saturated muck, seen in closeup and looking more like the expressionistic splashes of pigment in an action painting by Willem de Kooning or Jackson Pollock. As with *Broad Channel*, the film's aural soundscape of the natural environmental sounds adds to the sense of soaking in the present moment.

Christman's other strand of crafting moving image works can be seen in the short film *Dear Bill Gates*, beginning with the filmmaker's letter to the computer industry billionaire, heard by us in narration accompanying a variety of found images and original footage. Unlike the previously mentioned

***In Gowanus Canal, a portrait of the disreputably putrid smelling, toxic waterway in south Brooklyn, we once more begin with the water's surface. But in this case it resembles anything but water when first observing this colorful, chemical-saturated muck, seen in closeup and looking more like the expressionistic splashes of pigment in an action painting by Willem de Kooning or Jackson Pollock.***

films, it is a work unconcerned with the attentiveness to the here and now, but instead takes us into an associative film-essay, taking us to abandoned mines, photographic repositories, natural decay and mortality, that, in the words of the filmmaker, "draws unexpected connections among mining, memory, and Microsoft."

While the screening at Connectivity Through Cinema will not include the 50-minute experimental documentary *As Above, So Below*, it is a work that bridges these two filmmaking modes, with the observational camera capturing the sense of place before the lens, and the reflective thoughts expressed by the film's voiceover interviews. "Garbage is one very chronic and unsettling reminder of the inherently ephemeral nature of everything," declares Robin Nagle, anthropologist-in-residence for New York City's Department of Sanitation, as we view the debris scattered over the beach at Dead Horse Bay. It is this ephemeral nature we find threaded through all the works, in the preserving of a trove of photographs deep within a temperature-controlled vault, struggling against their natural disposition to fade away, or the ephemeral images upon the movie screen itself, the camera's lingering record of the ever-passing moment of the present.

# BOOG CITY'S

## 12th Annual

# NYC

## Small Presses Night

**Thurs. Nov. 20, 6:00 p.m.**

**Sidewalk Cafe**  
**94 Avenue A**  
**The East Village**

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**Bone Bouquet**  
<http://www.bonebouquet.org>  
Krystal Languell, ed.

**DoubleCross Press**  
<http://www.doublecrosspress.com>  
MC Hyland and Jeff Peterson co-eds.

**Lunar Chandelier Press**  
<http://lunarchandelier-lunarchandelier.blogspot.com>  
Kimberly Lyons, ed.

**Louffa Press**  
<http://www.louffapress.com>  
David Moscovich, ed.

**The Operating System**  
<http://www.theoperatingsystem.org>  
Lynne DeSilva-Johnson, ed.

**We'll Never Have Paris**  
<http://www.wellneverhavepariszone.com>  
Andria Alefhi, ed.

And music from:

**Yeti**  
<http://yetimusic.co/>



Tracey McTague  
Greenpoint, Brooklyn  
*alms for the birds*

sky burial waiting  
on exquisite harness  
trajectory of running joke  
in a gambler’s fleeting debut  
look under hat  
for patchwork response  
to full-blown wince  
baggies in the hallway  
on this side of herald  
a pregnancy’s ghost felt  
between phantom limbs  
this bright vultures’ blessing  
scattered lightning in shabby light  
of shadow’s restored fly-by  
our conspirator unit in barefoot collision  
by proxy promises & threat of exhale  
as a culture: we have reached maximum beard  
soaked in whiskey resurrection  
instagramed 1977 filter salve  
for slur of broken land’s native tongue  
keeps our faded wizards only half alive  
& burnishes sober colluding  
with limbo seeds for orphaned suburbs  
in an obsolete kind of way  
we flourish & yet exist  
just hoboes riding whales  
in outer limits of abandoned frills  
& gone to seed redemption



Barbara Henning  
The East Village  
*Our Sky is Our Sky*

Billboards along the BQE take up  
a lot of sky. On a day like today,  
we lose green but gain U.S.  
unarmed aircraft protection—  
But, it’s our sky, says Al-Asadi.  
Up above the branches, down below  
the tree digester spits out  
bits and pieces to warm the earth  
and plants through the winter freeze.  
Encased in wood, metal and cement,  
our bodies rarely nourish anything.  
One and only one republican  
has been given protection  
from the elements and this  
is designed to cement his image  
as a front-runner. Safe inside—  
the traffic sounds like the tide,  
a car door slamming and instead  
of seabirds, the twitter of voices  
on the street and the sound of air,  
quietly and continually filling  
and leaving my lungs while upstairs  
love bangs the bed against the wall.



Joseph Young  
Baltimore

*The Property Commute*

The outdoor churns in traffic and rain, bells. Get over here, she  
says, the mother in something red. The kids with their eager  
knees, bungled, imperial more than even the crows.  
Will the lovers stand  
If you were a woman and threw your leaves to the ground,  
then the trees. Roofs and skies some silver change. Oh lord,  
she says, something red.  
Will the lovers stand  
Sirens no emergency but the calling of sleep. Sidewalk take  
the knees, the silver walking down. Come here, she says.  
Stand



Sara Lefsyk  
Boulder, Colo.

*It Will Take Me Twenty Paces*

**IT WILL TAKE ME TWENTY PACES** to get to that tree. Meanwhile, William  
James is boxing somewhere in the corner. I can see his pony from here. I say: next  
climb onto that bridge and wait there William. At night some things can reappear.  
Like the time they told me to make a doll out of clock parts but instead I made a  
strobe light and sat on it for a while.

The whole scene went something like this: a man, seeing a transparent dog walk  
on air, walks off the edge of a hill and falls into his world alone. He says: “my  
hand is red and on fire.” We are using someone else’s night voices.

At night a woman wears blue and forgets about weather.

In this next scene William is trying to convince me to build a clock out of doll  
parts. When I say: I want to trick William into the very air, I mean: I need a  
benefactor the size of his ghost. I water his birds but still he will not let go of  
cloth and lend me his gown

BOOG CITY

**Issue 93**  
**editor/publisher** David A. Kirschenbaum  
**editor@boogcity.com** **art editor** Jeffrey  
Cyphers **Wright art@boogcity.com** **film**  
**editor** Joel Schlemowitz **film@boogcity.com**  
**music editor** J.J. Hayes **music@boogcity.com**  
**poetry editor** Buck Downs **poetry@boogcity.**  
**com** **printed matter editor** Emily Toder  
**printedmatter@boogcity.com** **small press**  
**editors** Bruce Covey **smallpress@boogcity.com**  
**counsel** Ian S. Wilder **counsel@boogcity.com**

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**BOOG CITY**  
330 W. 28th St., Suite 6H, N.Y., N.Y. 10001-4754  
212-842-BOOG (2664)  
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<http://www.josephayoung.tumblr.com>

Bio

**Barbara Henning**’s most recent  
books are two collections of poetry  
and prose, *A Swift Passage* and *Cities*  
& *Memory*. Born in Detroit in 1948, she  
has lived in New York City since 1983.  
She teaches at Naropa University and  
Long Island University in Brooklyn where  
she is professor emerita.

**Sara Lefsyk**’s first chapbook, the  
*christ hairnet fish library*, is available  
from Dancing Girl Press. Her second  
chapbook, *A small man looked at me*, is  
forthcoming from Little Red Leaves Press.  
Her work can be found in such places  
as *Bateau*, *Phoebe*, *The Greensboro*  
*Review*, and *The New Orleans Review*,  
and online at *dearsir.org*, *poetrycrush.*  
*com*, and *scapegoatreview.com*.

**Tracey McTague** lives up on Battle  
Hill in Brooklyn, down the street from  
where she was born and across the  
room from where her daughter was  
born. She is an ornithologist and con-  
sigliere by day. By night, she is a root  
doctor, alchemist and hunter-gatherer.  
Her first book, *Super Natural* (Trembling  
Pillow Press), was just born last summer  
in New Orleans.

**Joseph Young** lives, writes, and  
makes art in Baltimore. Look for more  
of his work at *verysmalldogs.blogspot.*  
*com*.



**Linda Griggs** was born in Clinton, Okla., received a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Virginia Commonwealth University, and a Master of Fine Arts from Hunter College.

Artist's Statement

I've been working with story art since 1992. My current series is "The First Time Is Not Like Porn" which compares real life, first time, sexual experiences with images from porn.

Linda Griggs  
Lower East Side



**The First Time Is Not Like Porn - Car Sex (British Steering Wheel)** 8" x 11" MEDIUM?

**Re: losing virginity stories.**

Inspiration: Billy Joel's song "Only the Good Die Young"

Motivation: reluctantly going off to Bible college

Cohort: Andy Meador

Setting: a deserted lovers' lane-type spot

Pre-coital wining and dining: a Coke from McDonald's drive-thru

Post-coital impression: much ado about nothing



**The First Time Is Not Like Porn - Car Sex (Steamy Windows)** 14" x 24" MEDIUM

[Invisataint](#) 20304 posts posted 20th Mar '08

.... it made me think about my virginity story it was awkward!  
It was in the back of a ford explorer on a main street on a saturday night. Cars and cops kept driving by so we'd be having sex and out of nowhere hed plop on top of me so the cars couldnt see him...my head kept hitting the back of the passenger seat...

[Colleen L.](#) 9190 posts posted 20th Mar '08

The first time for me was in he back of a Pontiac 2000 LE. It wasnt too horrible, but definitely wasnt comfortable.



**The First Time Is Not Like Porn - Car Sex (Dusty Car Hood)** 12" x 12" MEDIUM

[\[-\]\[namedeleted\]](#) 5 points 1 year ago

I lost my virginity to a friend while we were drunk at a party. We decided to go fuck in his car. After the act I told him I needed to put my clothes on and pee. He told me he didn't want me to leave yet and handed me a Gatorade bottle to pee in. I was drunk and thought it was a good idea. I pissed all over the floor of the backseat of his car.



# Mimi Oz the Great and Powerful Catch Her While You Can Still Afford To



BY J.J. HAYES

I have heard at least twice, on different occasions, singers say that when someone says “I will have to listen to that song again” it is really a bad review clothed in politeness. It does seem a good way of avoiding having to tell someone you thought the recent product of their soul, psyche, life, and talent, sucked. The problem is that any song interesting enough to merit a second

hearing is not going to be grasped on the first hearing. Hell, single misheard words can change the meaning of a song, so I’m supposed to render judgment after a first listen? That seems a bit like claiming infallibility for my ears and the auditory/language areas of my brain. Plus, if someone is exploring new territory, musically and/or lyrically, I might not immediately grasp what’s going on, I may even dislike it on first listen.

But if the artist is one who I’ve grown to admire and trust and follow, I tend to think that perhaps I might be wrong, that maybe I should be silent and listen and maybe open myself up to the possibility of actually having these new territories revealed to me. And just what kind of absolute blowhard would I be if I spent my days bemoaning how the music industry and perhaps the listening public, does nothing but play it safe, no longer seeks the new, if it ever sought the new, no longer wants to deal in anything with real depth, if it ever wanted to deal in anything with real depth, if in my own listening I just rejected stuff cause I couldn’t figure it out.

I’m just saying, if you are a singer/songwriter on this scene, and I tell you “I will have to listen to that song again,” I’m not trying to evade telling you I don’t like your new song, I’m actually trying to avoid explaining why I think you are an interesting artist that may be challenging me, but I am not sure if I heard it right, and I think, given what I know of your work there is likely a lot going on there that I just didn’t get in the first hearing. OK, are we good?

But there are other reasons for needing to listen to some songs again and again. For instance, if I get caught up in the beauty of the melody or the performance, I actually miss the words. This keeps happening to me as I listen to Mimi Oz. I get transported. And by the time the song is over, I have completely forgotten that there are words I should be paying attention to. Then of course when I do listen, I have to listen again, because, well there is something that is challenging me, there is something interesting, there is, well, something. I don’t know what that something is, I can’t put my finger on it.

It comes in these little flashes. There are these clues that I picked up along the way that hinted that something worthwhile was happening in the person of Mimi Oz.

Mimi Oz first came to my attention, as this singer whom Phoebe Novak really seemed to connect with. This for me, as it should be for you, is a significant endorsement. “Phoebe scared the shit out of me

when I first met her,” says Oz, “she was enamored with my writing/singing style. There are a lot of things that connect us, but I can’t really speak for the universe.” I can’t speak for the universe either, but as a person trying to make sense of the universe, or trying to listen to the universe, I just figured that if Phoebe Novak connected to Mimi Oz, then perhaps I should sit down and listen.

I began doing that. For instance one evening I was sitting at a Mimi Oz show, getting lost in the music, pondering the variety of styles in these songs when it occurred to me that Mimi Oz could have had a number one hit in any number of decades. I now realize a time machine would be required for this to actually happen, but at the time it seemed like the best way to sum the situation up.

I of course am very suspicious of my own judgments, so when I heard that Joe Yoga had joined Oz’s band Rooster on the bass, I took this as yet another indication that I might be on the right track. Oz says “Rooster is hard to explain.” This may be the case but from the fans point of view, if an artist at the level of Yoga wants to join the band, the leader of the band likely has something genuine going on.

But then there was the conversation in the basement of the Sidewalk Cafe just after Mimi Oz and Rooster performed at the 2014 Summer Antifolk Festival. There, a number of us, who were quite blown away by the performance, were discussing the topic, which Ben Krieger elegantly summed up when he said that Mimi Oz may “have to make some hard choices.” That is, Mimi Oz is at a point where she is going to have to have the best musicians and the best producers and the best everything with her. We are talking the difference between triple-A and the majors. Of course that is a dangerous way of thinking, since the trade off for excellence in craft may be the actual soul of the enterprise. But I digress. My point is not that I agree or disagree with any of the opinions expressed in the impromptu round table near the

men’s room, but that Mimi Oz is one of those performers about whom this question is raised.

The history of the top 40, even the top 200, is not necessarily coterminous with what is good in music, good in words or good for finding truth and life in life and truth. But every once and while, much to the chagrin of those of us who don’t instinctively want to admit any virtue in the mainstream, interesting songs of depth actually chart. It occurs. Really.

And this is what links all these episodes—one senses that Mimi Oz actually has the potential to be that rare artist that can take something real into that other world, you know, the one where they give out Grammy Awards. Hence also the link to my getting lost in her melody and performance—the world of popular music is strewn with songs in which the melody and the music transport you to these heights from which you crash in violent disappoint upon actually listening to the lyrics. Not so with Oz. She paints a good world. She transforms things. Like that point in “The Ocean” where a line which reads like pure cliché on the page “Some say love is an illusion,” gets rendered in live performance in such a way that you can actually feel the illusion, as if the word was a bubble that stretched and popped, leaving no more than a cartoon explanation point in the air which itself will dissolve.

But for me I know there is something highly non-illusory going on here, and I need to sit down and listen more closely to find out exactly what it is Mimi Oz is seeing from her side of her own eyes. I asked her about what she is listening to these days. She replied, “A performer that recently blew my mind is Daniel Benjamin Buxton. Originally from Vancouver, I met him right before this summer playing a small show in Toronto. He is an incredible experience, and he plays solo. Twisted strange vocal techniques mixed with catchy rhythms, he plays with emotion through the roof. He plays a cover of ‘Motherless Child’ that blew me away. So I would recommend.”

It is almost as if Mimi Oz sees in Daniel Benjamin Buxton, what I sense is in Mimi Oz. But that judgment will have to wait another day. In the meantime I’m going to listen to that song again. And that song. And that song. And that song.

One senses that Mimi Oz actually has the potential to be that rare artist that can take something real into that other world—you know the one where they give out Grammy Awards



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## Bios

**J.J. Hayes** comes from Staten Island. Sometimes he is a poet, sometimes he’s a singer, and sometimes he writes about music and the world.

**Mimi Oz** backed by her all-male band is rocking New York City’s AntiFolk music scene with her wild variety of quirky sincere original music. Originally from Toronto, she moved to N.Y. after releasing her first full-length album *Three of Swords*, produced by the legendary Bob Wiseman (Blue Rodeo and more). She is working on her second full-length album funded by the Ontario Arts Council, due out this coming spring and titled *Men Who Never Loved Me*. Her new work is a collection of jazz blues, alt-country rock, and sometimes latin. Also on the burner is her new project and muse Rooster, which includes an EP set to be recorded upstate in N.Y.’s Catskills.