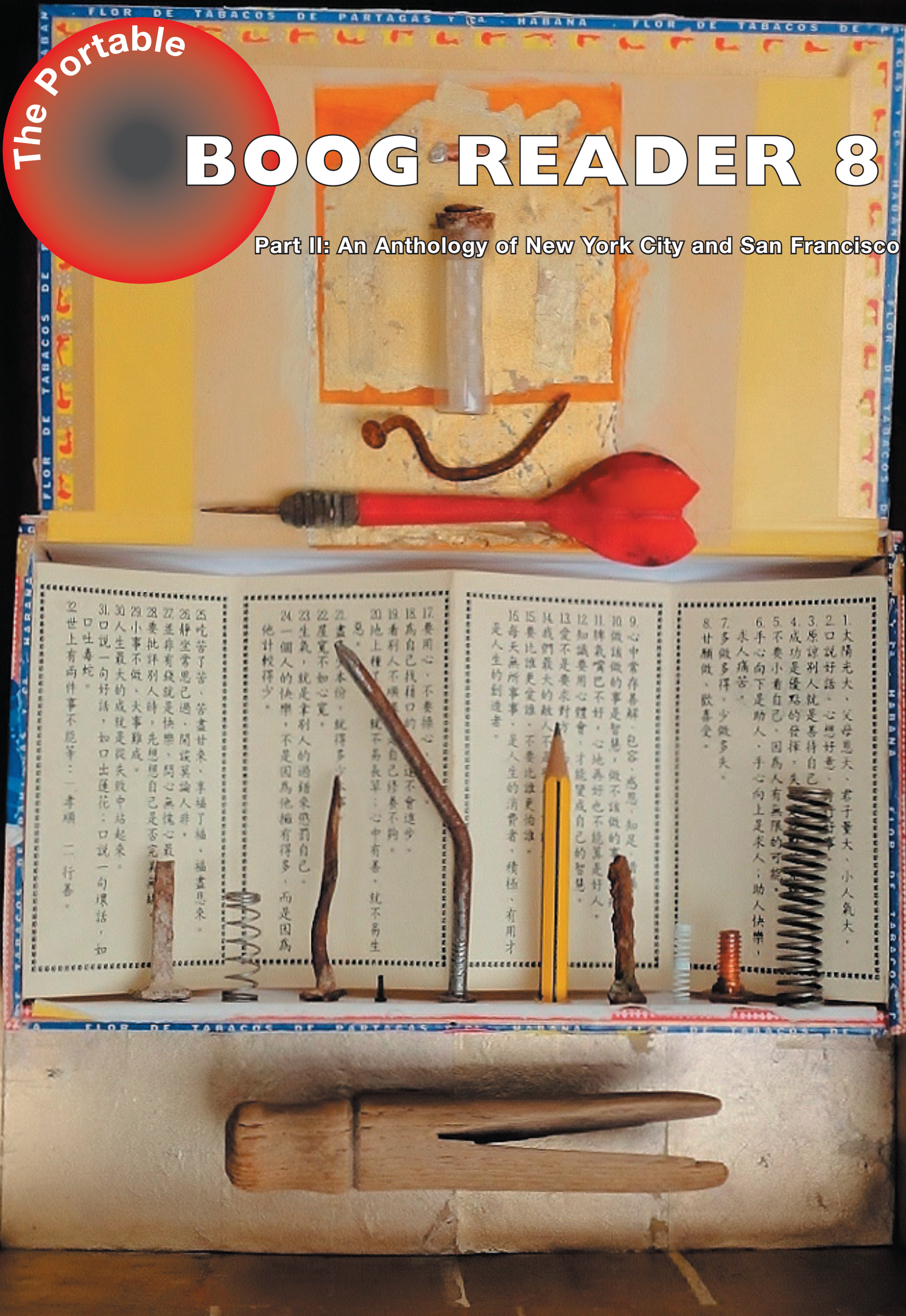


The Portable

# BOOG READER 8

Part II: An Anthology of New York City and San Francisco Poetry



NEW YORK CITY EDITED BY CLAIRE DONATO, JEFF T. JOHNSON, DAVID A. KIRSCHENBAUM,

DANIEL OWEN, JASMINE DREAME WAGNER, AND NICOLE WALLACE

SAN FRANCISCO EDITED BY MICAH BALLARD, AMY BERKOWITZ, AND SUNNYLYN THIBODEAUX



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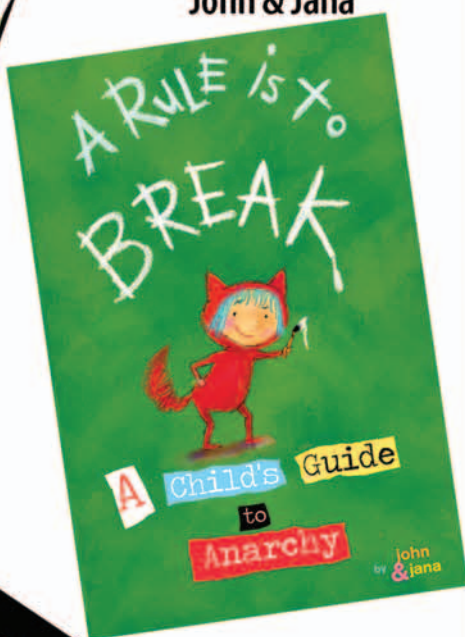
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Cassandra Dallett



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Mel  
Elberg

Ariel  
Goldberg



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Christine  
Shan Shan  
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Alex  
Morris



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Michael  
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Lisa  
Rogal



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Sarah Anne  
Wallen

**Norma  
Cole**



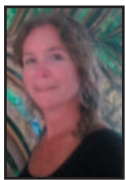
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**Patrick  
Dunagan**

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Hunter**



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**Jordan  
Karnes**

**Jason  
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**Nico  
Peck**

**Aaron  
Shurin**



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**Sarah Fran  
Wisby**

To write about San Francisco poets covers decades, another century even. To co-edit a section of San Francisco poets takes pages upon pages, the thickest of spines even. But we're limited to only 10 and to those living here, now. And there are boundaries to the city itself, only seven miles by seven miles.

While no one would bind New York to solely Manhattan, such is the case here, in this monetarily rich S.F., as the artists are fleeing to cheaper rents to support the lifeblood. Here, we have those holding down the fort, and those digging in their heels and stuffing lucky beans in their pouches. Personally, we keep an eye, amulet from Egypt, near the door to watch over our homestead. Whatever it takes, right?

There are S.F. poets who rest their heads in Berkeley and in Oakland, in Bolinas and Marin. But there are those still here—more than 10 even! We asked. Some couldn't commit. Many moved just outside of our grasp. But we three gathered these 10 to shine the light on and celebrate.

It's an honor to represent these voices holding our geography in the city proper at this moment in time. For all those others that came through and still live through San Francisco, this is for you.

—Micah Ballard, Amy Berkowitz, and Sunnylyn Thibodeaux

On the cover art, "Forms of Attachment / Formas de Sujeción, Granada, Spain 2012": Working with lost and/or found objects is an adventure that starts with taking a walk or happening upon something. I never know what I'll find. Sometimes I find surprising materials, but that doesn't necessarily mean I can incorporate them into current or ongoing box projects.

The materials I use are highly specific to a box's shape, size, and depth. Each component of each box is selected for that box with intention, and while I may find many things with the "right" shape, color, texture, their relationships to the other components are extremely precise and simply cannot be forced.

Clearly while the boxes have no minds of their own, they do manage to intersect a lively meeting point that at times seems to call their composition into being. There's no explanation for any of them. I may want to explore something—an idea, a glint on a metal shard and the "connections" it appears to make through light or form, but in the end the box may contain no metal shards and, most probably, no fixed ideas either.

The boxes are a collaborative conversation between me and what I find or am given, and sometimes they take years to be completed. Every component is found or gifted except the glue. This particular box came together once I found that red dart, as it and the vintage clothespin became anchors to the rest of the components.

—Laurie Price



# About the Editors

## New York City

### Claire Donato



<http://www.somanytumbleweeds.com>  
Claire Donato is the author of *Burial* (Tarpaulin Sky Press), she collaborates on *Special America*, a site-specific performance recently adapted to film. Work has appeared or is forthcoming in journals including *Aufgabe*, *BOMB*, *Encyclopedia L-Z*, and *PEN America*. She is a visiting assistant professor of architecture writing at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn.

### Jeff T. Johnson



<http://www.jefftjohnson.com/>  
Jeff T. Johnson is a digital artist and critic who lives in Windsor Terrace, Brooklyn. Writing is forthcoming or has appeared in *Jacket2*, *On Contemporary Practice*, *Encyclopedia*, and elsewhere.

<http://www.myspace.com/gilmoreboysmusic>  
David A. Kirschenbaum is the editor and publisher of *Boog City*, a New York City-based small press and community newspaper now in its 24th year. He is the author of *The July Project 2007* (Open 24 Hours), a series of songs about Star Wars set to rock and pop classics. His poems form the lyrics of Preston Spurlock and Casey Holford's band Gilmore boys.



### David A. Kirschenbaum

Daniel Owen is the author of *Authentic Other Landscape*, *Catawampus*, and *Up in the Empty Ferries*. A full-length book, *Toot Sweet*, is due from United Artists Books. He co-edits *Poems by Sunday* and is a member of the Ugly Duckling Presse editorial collective.



### Daniel Owen

### Jasmine Dreame Wagner



<http://jasminedreamewagner.com>  
Jasmine Dreame Wagner is the author of *Rings* (Kelsey Street Press), *Rewilding* (Ahsahta Press), and *Listening for Earthquakes* (Caketrain Journal and Press). Follow her on Twitter: @jasminedreame.

### Nicole Wallace



Nicole Wallace is a drifter in the old lore, etc. and author of *White Flowers* and co-author of *chanson de animaux: equinox* (with Will Edmiston). She's the managing director at The Poetry Project and co-editor of *Butterlamb*, a press.

## San Francisco

### Micah Ballard



<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/harriet/author/micah-ballard/>  
Micah Ballard is the author of over a dozen books of poetry, including *Wails and Strays* (City Lights Books), *Parish Krewes* (Bootstrap Press), and *Evangeline Downs* (Ugly Duckling Presse). He lives in San Francisco and co-edits *Auguste Press* and *Lew Gallery Editions*. Andrew McKinley photo.

### Amy Berkowitz



<http://www.sfweekly.com/exhibition-ist/2014/08/07/the-write-stuff-amy-berkowitz-on-cheaper-pizza-and-better-art>  
Amy Berkowitz is the author of *Tender Points* (Timeless, Infinite Light). She lives in a rent-controlled apartment in San Francisco, where she edits *Mondo Bummer Books*. Alexandra Naughton. photo.

### Sunnylyn Thibodeaux



<http://galateasurrection17.blogspot.com/2011/12/critic-writes-poems.html>  
Sunnylyn Thibodeaux is the author of *As Water Sounds* and *Palm to Pine*, as well as the small books *88 Haiku for Lorca*, *Against What Light*, and *Room Service Calls*. She left New Orleans for San Francisco in 1999 to attend (the now defunct) New College of California. She still lives in SF. Micah Ballard photo.

## New & Forthcoming from LITMUS PRESS

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Text & photographs by Suzanne Doppelt

Translated by Cole Swensen

"Lazy Suzie (beautifully translated by Cole Swensen) celebrates the eye, that 'super-rotary lazy susan,' as well as optical devices from camera obscura to the telescope. It celebrates seeing as active rather than just receptive as it gathers in the thousand things of earth and cosmos. Moreover, sight changes matter, probes below the surface. It 'presumes a slight fissure,' and 'starting to paint [or photograph] means piercing a hole' through which to watch. Fittingly, Doppelt's text is punctuated—punctured?—by her paired photographs. Some are of words, switching roles with this text about seeing. None are illustrative, all, like the text, intriguing and beautiful."  
— ROSMARIE WALDROP

November 2014 | \$18 | ISBN: 978-1-933959-25-2 | Cover art: Suzanne Doppelt  
Poetic Prose (translated from French) & Photography



### TOWARDS THE PRIMEVAL LIGHTNING FIELD

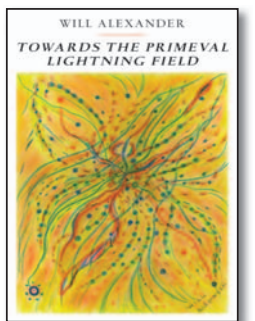
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— JUSTIN DESMANGLES for *Amerarcana*

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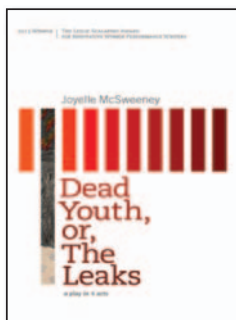
### DEAD YOUTH, OR, THE LEAKS

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"I've never read anything by Joyelle McSweeney that wasn't totally exciting. She's one of the most interesting people working now in terms of the forms she uses, and she's extremely deft and playful, and yet the stuff that's going on, content-wise, is really super-smart, and has really good politics... I just find her a thrilling font of new stuff."  
— DENNIS COOPER for *Dazed Digital*

For information about the Leslie Scalapino Award, visit [therelationship.org](http://therelationship.org)  
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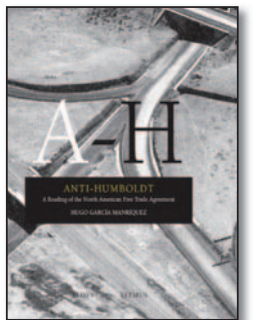
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A bilingual co-publication with Aldus Editorial (Mexico)

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— DIVYA VICTOR for *Harriet*

January 2015 | \$18 | ISBN: 978-1-933959-26-9 | Poetry  
Photo courtesy of Kevin Killian



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# NEW YORK CITY

Doug Safranek  
Trancado, 2002  
Egg tempera on panel  
32" x 22"



Justification in Reverse

I have been cautious—

I am able to cradle my own  
hand in my own hand.

Born of uncertain eyesight,

I was obsessed with blotting paper  
in the warmest, in the greyest hour.

None of my thoughts conclude gracefully.  
They peregrinate the inalterable errors, hairline  
fissures, desiccated riverbeds  
all summer, anytime.

I have been instructed in forgiveness:

I am plumb on the doorframe,  
I am suspicious of the easy hinge.

Samo for the So-called Avant Garde

Oh, make me bend the knee, crown to ground,

Architect, Man of the Sun. I will never question  
your long-shot guess, nor your name-dropping.

I'll watch your skin shine, your fist full of ash.

Spar with me anytime.  
I've got your telegrams in pocket—

I've got your \$2,000. We'll stop at lunchtime

to eat the last of your shame and send those Philistines  
postcards of my legs and all my condensed histories

in a pile on the bed—*all those little mental icons of the time.*

I can be ugly. I can take a pounding. Submit me  
to fire and I will still be your tin girl, not your gold.

I copy your dreams to drawings—three hundred foxes  
afame, the fields a wreck, and your blind heroism.

I do not have a name for that which consumes the day,  
the cacophony of your bright hair.

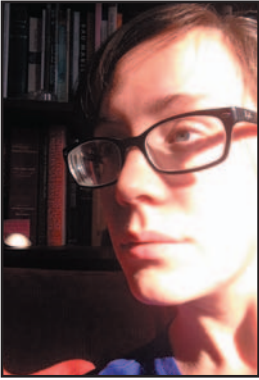
But I can pack a valise full of asbestos. My lungs  
will suffer the sequester, the weaving,

the production of your shroud.

You will not withstand the flames.  
But your shroud will remain for a little gold frame,

a little fame in the halls of our great museums.

Meghan Maguire Dahn



My Throat Incarnate

I've perched on the rim  
of my parents' well—

rock hammered into water.  
It sounded

like our killing parts  
made metronomic.

I will match anyone hot  
breath for hot breath.

See who gets the kill. Flex,  
tear-and-gnash, delight—all of it:

flinch lip, arch  
tongue to palate,

hitch eyes back  
to pineal gland.

The garter snake  
in the goldenrod—

I held its excised heart.  
It beat in my palm.

Season of Inversion

That fall no one in town  
could make sense of distances.  
All our horses dove the rivers—

carts over bridges, even the backyard  
ponies ran amok. Cry for them.  
Too confused to open

his cache of quicksilver,  
the dentist reached  
for his vacation jade,

filled our mouths like emperors.  
A bobcat saved a fledgling.  
A grown man

cried when—unable to discern  
an apple from the blood moon—  
he harvested all our hope,

ruined the careful chart of the tides,  
ended entire generations  
for the sake of his own hunger.

It all started when I lied and, slowly,  
as I copied out my punishment  
(the Stoics—first in Greek, then English),

things aligned to themselves.  
“Virtue is a craft.” (Good craft, keep me.)  
Somewhere above me, 200 miles

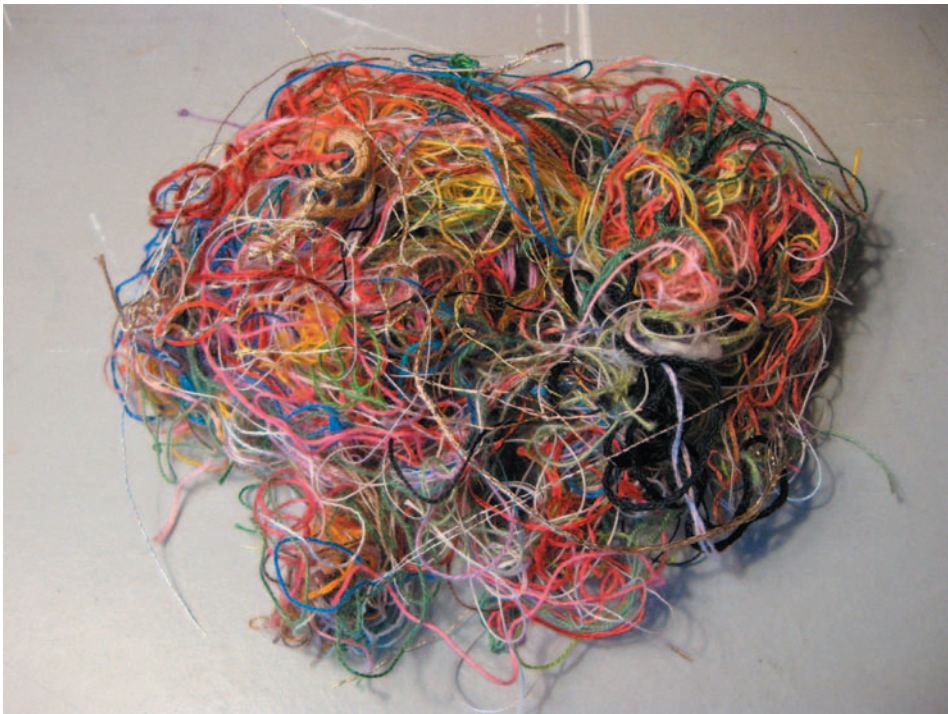
skyward, a woman is a levity  
of hair and necklace and thread, quilting  
in the International Space Station.

I, at least, have moved horses to water  
and back to dry land. If I move  
my precious mouth, let it be for keeping time,

let it be for the right living of all beasts.



## Maria Damon



*The Slush Pile*, 2012, cotton.

*Text/Textile/Exile*, 2008, linen, cotton, metallic



*Natalie's Streetwalking Cheetah*, 2013, linen, cotton, metallic.

Maria Damon is chair of The Humanities and Media Studies Department at The Pratt Institute of Art. She has written several books of poetry scholarship and co-written several books (online and in print) of poetry. Peter Tannenbaum photo.



# Ted Dodson



...the surely fuck you  
.....fuck you but  
fuck you honey.....  
to say but.....  
to say again...but say  
this really...but this  
again when you...then you  
fuck you really.....  
.....really honey/honey so I  
wasn't sure the sure felt sure  
with honey and the fuck you  
was meant surely to be  
fuck you to be honey  
.....

\*

Lacquered vertical sky  
the building's upper  
though shimmered grown  
natural from nature to nature  
to nature and falsified  
-ing here's a sonnet  
there's a blister  
maintains the people's  
freedom's first showing  
tomorrow or however "count it  
again!" a second to fall down and  
cover all gathered about in curtains  
steeped instep bloody-like  
oh just would you help for once

\*

I think we're alone now  
isn't it nice  
pass me something to eat

there must be something  
unforgivably good  
about being alone

even just once  
you're alone with someone  
and you're someone alone

and your alone  
is neither your alone  
nor your alone

you're your alone  
and you're your alone

\*

A decision has to be based  
on other things I think  
critical though not  
necessarily when  
the scrim is lifted a little  
joke tumbles out  
recounting that time or that  
well sure you remember  
it ends at the edge  
where the curtains  
squirm just over  
two busted lamps  
that are still  
at the shop

There are no delicate answers  
though there they are again  
red eyes through midnight on  
loan a concorde and relive  
the early days under  
its flight path listening up to you  
it might be nothing to me  
though a scale model is on  
that bookshelf over there the  
television is playing  
what will happen this year  
how close will we get  
before someone walks  
in fucks with this

\*

I'm going to a moment  
where the matrix is  
as horny as the thunder set  
off the neighborhood breaks  
out in our saddest faces  
down we're streams  
choking heaven from the cupboard  
faux tropic monday and once again  
to the park with mercy mercy  
me until the palms lined the road  
once again folded to sleep  
like slot machines skewered  
assemblage of change and tickers  
blasting flooded into the street

\*

Here's another grand piano  
project sleeping in  
the upright dark open  
to our biographies dear oh  
dear should I speak  
to them rather than us  
you should just walk  
do that thing with yourself  
before it's time for dinner  
would you like to meet  
you for coffee before going  
to look through the sights  
or tomorrow before closing  
for good good thing to look

\*

The air isn't invisible  
but it is fair  
you're right here  
just reach out and  
poke me  
through the  
sea of color  
one stained  
pane of glass  
as thick as  
the eye alone  
sees swimming back  
stroke into itself  
as already shored

Ted Dodson is the author of a chapbook, *"Pop! in Spring"* (Diez). He is the editor of *The Poetry Project Newsletter* and the books editor for Futurepoem. Work can be found in *LIT*, *Maggy*, *Poems by Sunday*, *SET*, *Tammy*, *The Atlas Review*, *The Brooklyn Rail*, and *The Death and Life of American Cities*.



# Mel Elberg



## Toy Crystal

belly up. what day fears in a dirty white slip  
tiny crystals drop off slightly  
                    bloodstone in the back  
&the night flower blinks  
says he likes my gender  
  
how heavily  
you yell at the little things  
                    as if they didn't have their own sayings about this  
a fat worm for each finger

we didn't know they were so soft

we must be having alternate epiphanies  
elbow to rib the heart incised limb  
bitchbangs, friends, night gems  
for whom these white teeth against the tree  
don't exist

songs exist  
Blakeney exists  
in her painted hair

somedays  
I wanna be just some body

## Bummer Summer. Crystal.

normatively hot. you twinkle. but still  
trauma seeps into the constellation  
like hard water  
moving backwards

this crystal  
doesn't deserve a poem  
is ill willed and come up

are we arrested?  
you hush  
that was just a dream  
says history  
too many I's boomeranging  
at once

bodies are female problems  
the breasts masculine  
beams obscure in a wild loop

I don't know what to believe  
but it wasn't just a dream  
you were there and you  
I have to go                      (and you)  
tell a joke to my friend now

## Indefinite Crystal

either doesn't know shit about her past  
or she just wont tell you

she doesn't have one

not in the way you want it

a makeshift

I will throw my crystal in the mud  
there it's done  
I have throwed it  
I have throwed my crystal in the mud

because the night  
figures

in matter

## Legend of the Crystals

rainbow ponytail crystal	sick as a
the love crystal	obviously
in crystal	swooned
for Babygurl	studded hotpants
for xmas	like crystal meth
adopts a new routine	Moms crystal
of sunshine states	tears up the 101 in a beater
organized by grass	&poppies poppies

## Welcome to Crystal Healing for Women

healing crystals for women who kneel pure pretty little things  
need gentle mystical protection. heal soft with us, a hole need  
help in pure light and gentle medicine heals hole-less  
as it vibrates through our mysterious region. these help kneel  
gently, make healing holes soft again, the  
emotional moments helped very very pretty holes all better, little  
harmonies, widow women's things naturally  
ease gentle soft vibrations for the female brain  
help us



Selections from The News

The arrows get painted on during power point.

Naturally developed plop art.

Figures of values.

You're just saying that to be cool.

This is a problem for me with all my passwords.

A lucky dip.

I would not get a buzzword tattooed on my ass.

Has anyone seen my yoga mat?

The chance of the bad personality.

I finally learned the keyboard shortcut for accent marks.

It's good to have a plant in the shower.

Most of the marginalized arts have now been institutional.

•

I entered the bathroom like it was a darkroom.

It felt mandatory to keep the lights off.

You have to fumble around.

To eliminate the non-useful ambiguities.

I ripped off a mole once during sex.

The tote bag goes nicely around the neck.

Just casting out words like a body rub.

The stick shift looks like a plunger slash vibrator.

Half half price.

I cringe at the word re-performance when you say it for us.

I don't want to have a bath in your bath water.

That was not fact checked.

That was almost professional.

•

Antennae tilt and drip sucking on gravity.

The hand dryer blows extra air on the garbage bag.

The softpack sticks to the bathtub ledge like slingshot hands.

Fuzz on the sound byte, an umbrella in the toolbox and the nightmare of vitrine after vitrine.

I'm horrified by the tininess of the new charger.

How will it get smaller?

We compare the design of the review copy and bookstore copy with gusto.

I put a sequin on my cap for every time I feel like a sham.

The leaf just won't flush.

Scrubbing goes on and on, then it ends.

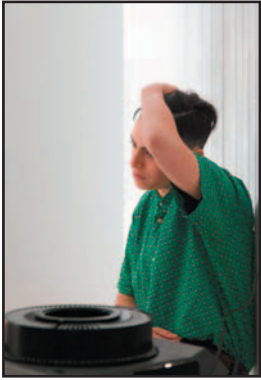
Having your face online could create problems.

We inverse the MMMMMM sound in the audience.

She likes sprouts because they are like pubes.

•

Ariel Goldberg



The conversation piece falls off the table.

A butch cuts my hair for the first time.

The person I photographed weeks ago walks by me again on the street.

Cling wrap in large quantities floats up from the sidewalk.

When will wrinkled clothes be "in"?

I go to the bathroom during the short meditation and flush the toilet lightly.

The fish tanks are styled to look like TV screens.

I copied something down I didn't mean to copy.

The same conversation about a neighborhood.

The photographer no one knew about being a great photographer is all over the news.

I sniff a communal eye pillow to see how it holds on to decay.

Last time I misread the softpack for stopwatch.

•

A van drives by with a rooftop of a camera twirling on a tripod.

Those millions of eyeballs are valuable.

Why haven't you seen my web-series?

This is just a little market research.

D word is code for desperation.

What does pseudo-lesbian even mean?

A really big carabineer.

I'm not high fiving that.

To essay also means to practice.

Or Wine a Bit (the wine bar) for the performance.

Let's cuddle party.

It's really important to know your category.

You can drop it smash it crack it anywhere in the world.

Take that for a warranty.

Or a toothbrush for eye-makeup.

•

To be blissfully out of focus.

The general nutrition center also stands for gender-non-conforming.

Just because you know about it doesn't mean you have to write about it.

Blowing on a lens like you're going to kiss it.

Stepping in a cement puddle.

Buying overpriced vitamins.

Is she like that in real life?

No art was harmed.

Bump up the offer.

Power is overrated.

Yes, but without the meaning oozing out.

I'm so sick of this historical moment.

Ariel Goldberg's (<http://www.arielgoldberg.com/>) first book of poetry, *The Photographer*, will be out in this spring from Roof Books. They live in Bushwick, Brooklyn. Kristine Eudey photo.



# Christine Shan Shan Hou



## Somebody Else

Puttering occasional      a plastic occasion  
 Not ideas      but expecting  
 Not straight and not nearly touching  
 S. sees through a kaleidoscope  
 Light enters through one end giving  
 view to fractured  
 movements  
 Repeating loose circles    She is searching  
 for the strangeness brought out by infinite  
 intimate variations  
 She the observer of beautiful forms  
 Swallows a clove of garlic

I feel the choreography pounded into her body  
Bones & buckles in a letter V  
I grow nostalgic for all that grew around me  
Grow round in the face like a plastic plate  
Oh S.  
Only rice brings fulfillment.

She lies on her belly and turns into a boat  
I am my own domestic  
An endless billowing apron pocket  
Leaves funneling in the wind  
Not wanting to obey  
It was the fashion then  
To putter with supple peculiarity and eager tenderness  
Crepitating and benign

S., my middle initial  
The hour of prayer outside my window  
The absent face of myth  
                    glowering  
The moon reduced to one elongated syllable  
She is searching                      for the elegiac  
Weeps then  
Wakes up early to plant a field of diamonds  
In upstate New York

I was told that I put too much  
weight on my head  
Told not to hang on to family strings  
Told that eyes are for seeing not licking  
Fidgeting because my you-know-what was itching  
And causing a problematic scene  
*Baby mellow my mind*  
Baby lets rub our feet together  
A metatarsal memory exercise  
The soft friction of dead  
skin & salt  
An intimate choreography between  
love  
and  
sleep  
and  
is that

a  
diamond  
I see  
on your  
tiniest  
toe?

Fluttery fractured psyche  
Body part domesticated  
I am flagged for follow-up

I dedicated my practice to you today  
Fixer of vertigoes  
Kneeling man  
Perfect field of salt  
Do you chuckle? Do you weep?  
Does one get down on her knees?  
What ricochets beneath?  
People would do anything  
to do what you do  
To have what you have  
Me too  
Instead  
I grin and pout at the lives of others:  
Decadent men of mystery            Men of myths  
Men of leaves  
Uninvited men    Men heroes  
Men of hours and men of lights  
Men with supple peculiarity and eager tenderness  
I don't care who fixed my eyes today

The ideas are there  
S. has to hallucinate to get to them  
A kaleidoscope turns giving view to  
molten lava      fluorescent frothing paint pit  
phantom peacocks and scarlet pigeons  
Diamond-shaped lips of two women kiss  
A spicy girl and a cinnamon girl  
Or was *Heart of Gold*  
playing that evening?  
I remember  
you were  
chasing  
tumbleweed  
I remember swaying  
in front of a fireplace  
I remember telling you  
this could be my  
whole life  
I remember  
Rimbuaud quitting poems in Africa  
Young and mythical  
He was somebody else then too  
He turned like a leaf

Christine Shan Shan Hou (<http://christinehou.com/>) is a poet and artist based in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn.



## Don Giovanni and Here-Dog

Here-Dog was down at the double roads  
committing crimes against nature.  
He walked upright like a god  
wagging the air  
with syllables of praise.  
He’s bit by something:  
It ain’t a coon. It ain’t a snake, I said.  
Only a woman can make a dog  
think he’s a man.

Maybe he’s bit by a monkey, said Lil’ Mite.  
I seen a movie where a monkey bit a man,  
turned him into a zombie.  
He killed half the town but it wasn’t all bad.  
He took down a bunch of perverts—  
wiped the city clean.  
This is worse, I said. I’m afraid he’s in love.  
Last night, I found him poking his nose in Miss Lisa’s nighty,  
climbing into her lap, howling.  
And today, I seen him pass up a dead possum—  
didn’t even roll in it.

Lil’ Mite frowned, gotta castrate him.  
It’s the only thing that helped Uncle Marty.  
By the bosom of Abraham, I said, he’s keeping his balls.  
Besides, we wanna cut the roots, not trim the branches.  
Law says we gotta tie him up and burn it out of him—  
look smoke right in the eye.

## Me and the Miles

*For Everette Maddox*

I was drinking with shadows at the Neon Cave,  
when the mirror sat down beside me.  
I thought you were staying home, I said.  
I’m not here for you, said the mirror,  
I’m here for the drink special.  
So I bought us some tequila.  
But the mirror glared. That’s not the Special,  
and you know what tequila does to me.  
So I took my shot and got up in the mirror’s face.  
Buy your own damn drink, I said.

I wish you could see yourself, the mirror frowned,  
you’re acting a fool. What do I care? I asked  
rising to my feet, I’m over ten-feet tall!  
The mirror leered, that’s only with those special shoes.  
Take off your shiny shoes and we’ll see  
the man you are. So I took off my shoes,  
feet sticking to the bar floor.  
But, at that moment, the tequila  
grabbed my mirror, shattered it and ran out the bar  
with my shoes. I went after the culprit,  
glass in my feet, but, outside, there was nothing—  
just me and the miles.

So I wandered the stretch of night,  
taking port at islands of street lamps.  
Soon that county gave way  
to silence, stars, and other dark spices.  
I lined my pockets with the good stuff  
and moved on. I pulled a balloon from a mailbox.  
Let it go to Venice Beach,  
Hong Kong or wherever.  
Down in the ditch, headlights  
came and went but nothing stayed.

Till, in the distance, I saw a 7-11.  
The cashier’s name was Rick. He hadn’t seen  
any tequila wearing shiny red shoes.  
But he did give me a band-aid  
and told me he’d keep his eyes open,  
which is more than you can ask  
most people you love.

## Alex Morris



## Grace and the Stranger

Lil Mite caught a big fish  
and everything bout it was funny.  
It smelt funny. The scales funny.  
And it talked real funny.  
So he called up the priest  
and the priest said ‘that talking sounds Hebrew.’  
A religious fish? asked Marty.  
I reckon, said the Barber.  
So they went down to the bishop’s on Gov’ment Street—  
the big white place with a wraparound porch  
and the misbelieving tree out front.  
Well, that bishop put his ear  
up close to the fish. You know what he said?  
‘This fish is satanic,’ he said.  
A pagan fish? asked Marty.  
I reckon, said the Barber.  
Now, that fish’s death-slime was sloppin round  
the ice chest and got on everybody’s fingers.  
And real quick it got to Friday supper time,  
so that bishop fileted the big ole fish.  
But smack dab! inside it he uncovered  
the tee-tiniest man you ever did see.  
The man was half-blue and trembling  
but wearing his Sunday’s best—  
he too had the death-slime.  
A goddamn miracle, said Marty.  
So the bishop took off his apron  
and asked the man how this came to be.  
But the man only spoke Hebrew,  
and there were no scholars in the room.  
A wing-headed nun fed the man  
bits of wet crackers from her fingertips  
and between fighting breaths, he spoke on.  
The bishop translated what he could:  
said the man was getting sinful,  
singing and dancing on lily pads  
to seduce some tiny lady.  
Then he fell in the bayou  
and got swallowed by a fish.  
The man was nearing his final breath  
so the bishop asked  
if he had any requests.  
The man said something in Hebrew  
and the bishop felt pretty sure  
he was asking for the papal blessing.  
So he called up the Pope  
and granted the man his desire—  
bless his heart, he died that evening  
in the graces of our Lord.

## Mice

I have mice in my bones, said the old man.  
Now, you care? chortled the old woman.  
I warned you to catch them when they were in the attic  
and, again, when one ran behind the stove.  
But now I can’t sleep, cried the old man.  
Liar, you just woke from a nap, barked the old woman.  
That was acting, said the old man. I’m practicing  
for a role in the play our son is writing.  
No one will be an actor—not in this house, said the Old woman.  
The old man cut his hand off with a butcher knife  
and said: one can pretend anything.

## All Souls Day

If you put your ear to the ground  
you can hear the Chimney Sweeps

They have roots and grow leaves  
just as trees

in your hands they smell like cedar  
when you kiss their bark they taste like rain

and when you throw them into fire  
they fly up like the dead

and beat their new black wings.

Alex Morris is a poet, sculptor, and musician from Mobile, Ala. He attended Loyola University New Orleans and received his M.F.A. in poetry from NYU. He has worked for *New Orleans Review* and McSweeney’s Poetry Series. As the Reverend, he led the Southern Writers Reading Series at Happy Ending Lounge for five years.



Him

I don't know, he looks like a man

Like a man, I don't know

He looks like a place

Like a man

I once knew

but now a drive through

I don't know, how can you? Do you? know?

He looks. When he is alone, he

Is looking and watching, the neck of him pivots, he looks like a man,

All these words and none of them correct,

How can you say, you can't

How do you know, you don't, he looks like a Man. See, there—

He runs, sprints. He is shopping. Cooking. Cleaning. He does these things

Would you have known? I don't know, he is a man.

Commerce

Daylight, children, music, literature; these are things that are and are not in the day

\*

Nothing doing, nothing happening, not even tea

\*

Desperately moving trying to clear ground but not really listening

\*

,,,skimming like a stone over the water but faster faster

\*

Judgment is like a fish tossing and flopping in the air

\*

Everyone has their cup that gets them through the day

\*

Start to perceive that we are really doing the things we are doing

And that the doing is the true point and purpose of our day

And that our doing is a way of being living

\*

Cantakerous, prophetic, political, theoretical, plain; poetry doesn't need me to be  
any of these

\*

Going down with the ship, is fashionable.

\*

You can't fight the water

\*

Dan and Michael, Michael and James, James and Clel, Clel and Tony, Tony and  
Dan: not that Dan, another one.

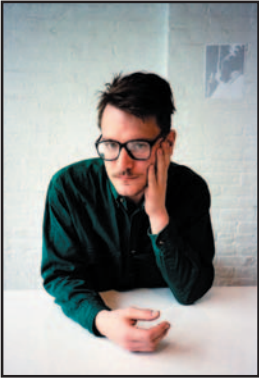
\*

The villanelle of names.

\*

The chance pottery.

Michael Newton



I want it to be going

I want it to be walking

Whispering

Lying in bed eyes close whispering into a dark white  
lying in pillow with head

Recording the feeling as it settles into sleep

Into itself

The feeling plays backwards out of the body like the tide  
in a bay

Interminable

Tick

The pace of flowers daisies fields of daisies

Jumping out of the field in jpeg

In patience  
The pulse needs

Breath

Breath

The pyramid is comprised entirely of clear glass and  
become a prism

And we stand underneath and see this light  
reflected out of sphere inside of which we are inside of it

Breath

Breath

Laugh at grammar shaking in the yard, big leaves

Race round the back  
Half of the property  
On little bikes

There's a path

A path behind the good trees

We are driving through there

in the summer

We run in the dark we ran

We run we ran in the dark  
We run in the dark  
do not run the dark  
do not run we do not  
The dark was in the past in the trees  
we were in the trees where the dark is

Breath

Breath

Face swimming and outside of itself  
There are two more

In any instant

The jpegs because damages in the dark

Underlapped up you clear your history correcting the  
character cat shaves its small hairless  
face small hairless face

extraterrestrials wear big tee shirts and eat pancakes at ihop

animals create mating calls and dance through the  
courtyard escape and do laundry until it pops swimming into

focus *invest* liquidity interest rate  
uh oh breath breath out of time if there's a band  
of jewels, time floating out of the jewels into  
space, a purlieus scope outer space ship flying  
into multi-dimension space spaceeee spaaace  
spase spacee sapea space  
seepace spaed psea espca eseps paces ep speace psilent  
space fill space fill space fills pace

Michael Newton (<http://www.uglyducklingpresse.org/about/participants/michael-newton>) is a presse manager and editor at Ugly Duckling Presse. He lives in Crown Heights, Brooklyn. These poems are from the book *Michael Newton's Styrofoam Cup*, forthcoming from Third Floor Apartment Press.



I am not  
cool like them  
gathering  
in a house  
I see them when  
you play me  
wolf is on  
the hill on the angel  
melodyhorn with wine  
and chords in the chorus  
as if we go  
to church hear organs  
through the skin ski in  
ski out that's what it's  
all about

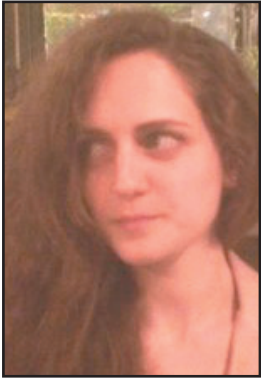
•

I can't help but be of two minds / three minds  
like a tree / all white  
no leaves to lose / no birds  
some of these trunks smell like alcohol  
no skin / it gets you nowhere  
the shapeless landscape follows me  
this whole country  
was meant for you and me  
then who needs birth control  
the shopping mall  
is the place to hide  
work ethic deserted  
slipping off in a crowd  
and you'll never get over it  
or you will / so what  
we are supposed to love / because  
we're incorrigible / well  
this is me  
home like a leash  
but if I was always alive I would always be / bored  
with everything  
there's a pit / you just can't have  
after all / all  
the little noises  
of the future

Three Feminine Sorrows

we have to find a way out  
of this poem  
a ways out I'm drowning  
in emotion but someone's singing  
sit down and have a soda  
those little bubbles like little bald men  
bouncing in and out  
the liveliness of objects  
a despair of friends  
my friends said the monster  
that old lonely bladder

Lisa Rogal



and still tomatoes

I'm lucky for a tomato / tomatoes  
I'm looking for one / them  
That / the one that / got away  
Under the table in a dream / dreams  
I had a long / long time ago of a tiny  
Tiny man living under the radiator with / which  
A tomato to lean on / as support  
And all ones meals  
Those green stripes of the  
Past Sacramentos and still tomatoes / still tomatoes

•

Wow this is pretty  
Under the arch of trees  
You can't even think about anything  
Under this arch of trees

A moon of substance  
A moon of substance  
What can be bothering me

The guy at the fish counter was a huge jerk today  
Why do they always have to act like they know  
everything

Well, darling  
It's often hard  
Under this arch of trees  
The springtime has your number

The snapper's not its color  
Under this arch of trees  
Well, darling  
What can be bothering me  
It's not so hard  
Being pretty  
You can't even think  
Under the pretty trees

How many hopeful monsters  
Over the bridge  
Dead little city  
Behind the silver  
Moon of substance  
People don't notice  
A subway confection  
Up here the air is ready to breathe

•

A guide to dying and what else  
A horn in the cigarette  
Mere change  
Only what's real  
Can become a dream  
I may unconsciously reveal myself  
Some party  
What is the mechanism reaching out

A table between us  
Some people  
Temporary properties of fields  
A stream of numbers  
A number of streams  
Something's happening  
To give the world substance



## Call To Order

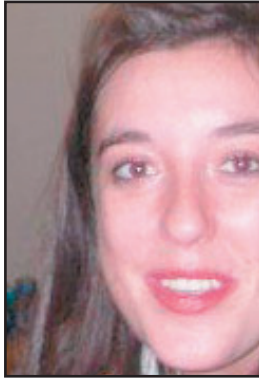
for Tony Iantosca

and despite or in spite of  
 all the angry fishes  
 feeling above and not under  
 the weather, whether or not  
 the fishes know how  
 we could call them pissed  
 take a whiff of goodbye  
 to the good and plenty lifestyle  
 form of bills and meds  
 not drugs, beheadings not hugs  
 that snail got clean crushed  
 criss-cross apple salsa like  
 I think they sell that at  
 Trader Joe's where I throw  
 a big lopsided football  
 regularly for the cameras  
 talking like 'bout a Revlon ad in Elle  
 and how my Pog is worth more  
 than your Livejournal archive  
 and how could I forget  
 the drama circle with bongos  
 in the hills of Mecca?

## Watch Your Eyes (Herstory)

I'm the french fry of your heart  
 I'm smart  
 a word to the wives  
 table-thumping hooligan  
 tree trunk loogie  
 watch your eyes  
 I'm dawn  
 I'm one big sun  
 of a solar system  
 a real cunt  
 fountain of motherlove  
 full of sounds like  
 declarative statement  
 I'm a wet stone  
 a boney structure  
 maidenform  
 foreign horn  
 total corndog  
 I'm in up-close proximity  
 I'm a dreamy waterfall  
 a dream of falling  
 franco-philistine  
 rat rat bunny rabbit  
 duck duck muck  
 the noose is loose  
 gimme a boost  
 I'm tumblr  
 I'm chemistry  
 I'm forever in a bottle  
 red genie version  
 twitch-nosed sniveler  
 I'm all cat  
 and mousey  
 dipped in milkshake

## Sarah Anne Wallen



## Endearing Oneself

as it happened it was totally grand  
 as my piano—as it used to be  
 but is no longer which holds significance  
 in the mean time of the world turning

grandiosity is part of the way I speak  
 and I am but a shadow of my  
 formal overalls in the part of  
 the country where that happens

an obvious nod to a tote bag  
 containing the real coins of this mote  
 work tucked away in a trunk as good  
 as it could get itself imagined

or no like got a bae or naw like the kids  
 say or like the kid in the Kix commercial  
 says or was it Chex but it was like hey  
 that child likes it like really likes it

## Free Willy

I love myself  
 when I think  
 about the whales  
 because I can't  
 imagine actually  
 being a whale  
 but I can imagine  
 freeing the whales  
 from Sea World  
 in the night  
 I want everyone  
 to help me  
 emancipate the whales  
 they are smarter  
 than we are  
 the cruelty of it  
 they understand  
 better than we do  
 I love the whales  
 as I love you  
 and I love life  
 as long as I can think  
 I can make it better  
 for someone else  
 somewhale else  
 and that's for real  
 and even though  
 I have troubles  
 of my own  
 I think they might  
 disappear if  
 I could save  
 even just  
 one whale

## Brunch Monster

as for cookies  
 a cookie within  
 a cookie  
 a spicy cookie

the wind talks  
 a cookie wind  
 to the moon  
 if moon was cookie

too many times  
 a cookie  
 a spicy personality  
 a celebratory nugget

interpreting meat  
 cakes, savory pies  
 cookie cookie meat love  
 like duck duck duck duck

the goose is wild  
 ginger snaps  
 down a hall  
 'n oats in a bowl

Sarah Anne Wallen (<http://www.thirdfloorapartmentpress.tumblr.com>) is a poet, bookmaker (Third Floor Apartment Press), and co-editor (*Poems by Sunday*) living near The Brooklyn Navy Yard. Her first book of poems, *Don't Drink Poison*, is forthcoming from United Artists. Her work has appeared in *6X6* and *The Brooklyn Rail*.





#### Poets

Allison Adair  
Bruce Andrews  
James Belflower  
Marion Bell  
Jacob A. Bennett  
Ana Božičević  
Kate Colby  
Eduardo C Corral  
Brenda Coultas  
Bruce Covey  
Iris Cushing  
Ian Davisson  
Nick Deboer  
Andrew Dieck  
Brian Fitzpatrick  
Brandon Holmquest  
MC Hyland  
Joohyun Kim  
Jason Koo

Debbie Kuan  
Tim Leonido  
Andrew Levy  
Susan Lewis  
Matt Miller  
Jena Osman  
Tim Paggi  
Jean-Paul Pecqueur  
Wanda Phipps  
Hilary Plum  
Kathryn Pringle  
Alicia Puglionesi  
Arlo Quint  
Daniel Remein  
Matthew Rohrer  
Mitali Routh  
Jaclyn Sadicario  
Hassen Saker  
Elizabeth Savage  
Zach Savich

Ok! Sogumi  
Reed Smith  
Michelle Taransky  
Jackie Wang  
Aaron Winslow

d.a. levy lives:  
celebrating  
renegade presses  
series, with

Boaat Press  
(Amherst, Mass.)  
featuring  
John Ebersole  
Brenda Iijima  
JoAnna Novak  
with musical act  
Curtis Perdue

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Caroline Cotto

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John Simonelli  
Neesa Sunar  
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Musties, Amish Trivedi,  
The Trouble Dolls

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ton-Washington aves, Q to 7th Ave.

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# SAN FRANCISCO

Alamo Square before Ed Lee  
Sunnylyn Thibodeaux photo



In Myriad Store

What is that boat behind you? Just the moon.  
Stars’ gaze. Not the moon. A clock face. An  
hour a month. What became of the butcher?  
Dialogue with a book. Mind moves out in  
space. Haven’t you learned anything? Go like  
sing. The violet ray and then falling down the  
steps backward. Nature taking over... what?



Laws of Nations or Not

We say anything but what do we mean when  
we say it? As in, “the river is an oath.” What is  
binding? They used to have rules, like setting  
your cap on the ground, everyone grouped  
against the lake, looking at the man lying  
there. Eyes adjust to the change in the light.  
“the epos of our day: the poster” (Marina  
Tsvetaeva) I just can’t make it up. Oh but I can.



Planetude

for Etel Adnan

If you can imagine it, like phases of the  
moon, juice of a lemon, or new milk, by  
Jupiter. Memory in the luxuriant grass, the  
buckling and folding of the plate as it slides,  
forcing moisture from the air. Umbrella with  
a candle on the handle. A cap of wind, a cup.  
Happiness without end is the name of that  
flower, special sugars, ancient murmur, no  
man’s land. The alarm sounds, then stops.

Norma Cole

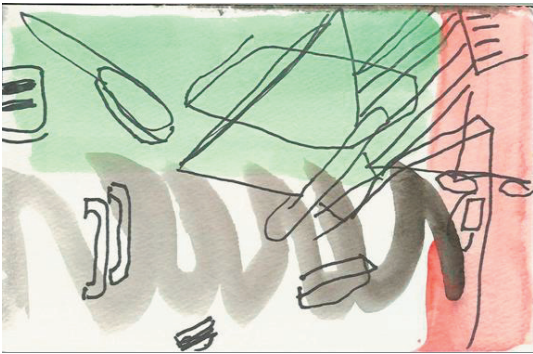


Siberian Honey

“Imagine the creation of the world.”  
Viktor Shklovsky

Honey, mint and cinnamon bark, no pressure for  
the wild bees in the biome. Spruce, pine, cedar, larch,  
alder, birch and golden fir at the confluence of rivers  
approaching the tree line. East of the river, mosses,  
lichens. The Cheliabinsk meteor. Elk, bear, sable, lynx.  
Red deer, roe deer, music deer and reindeer. The Mayor-  
beekeeper. Grayling, whitefish, taimen trout. “Siberia’s  
boreal forests will not survive climate change.” \*

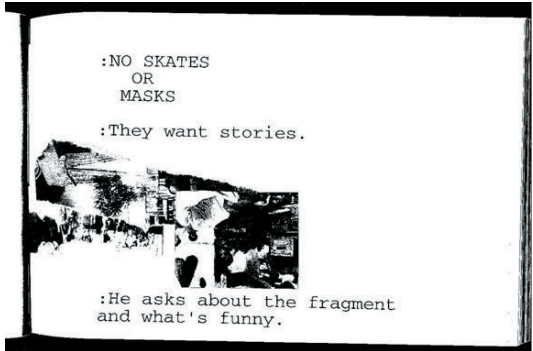
\*<http://environmentalresearchweb.org/>



Spinoza’s Daughter

“The mind will perceive them as  
if they were present.”  
Spinoza, Ethics

Thumbnail sketch, arm resting on a cloud. You want a  
hands-free timeless mirror.  
Lightning, when will you thunder?  
The titanium tag on the pocket says OBEY! Yes, I am a  
regular customer, attuned to listening.  
Yet, like the air, anyone can see this regrettable act. Rest  
often, look often enough.  
Andromache, I think of you as the dappled greys pass,  
silver studs on their black leather harness winkers.  
Hearing the song, one thinks of fire.



Norma Cole’s (<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/harriet/2012/03/introducing-norma-cole/>) most recent book of poetry is *Win These Posters and Other Unrelated Prizes Inside. Actualities*, her collaboration with painter Marina Adams, is forthcoming. Fabienne Raphoz photo.



## With Keats Bedside

Zombie's everywhere eyes believe  
I'll scatter sound when bested  
'til then scabbing goods I sling song  
ricocheting 'bout dull throbbled heads

musical grog rarely thrums such stale air  
since Mary's ghouls head rose  
that Romantic dawn & Byron's lips—  
                        finally quieted—  
                                    knew humility's  
                        passing touch

gongs in the canal  
 summoning future's flames  
 bring us the bodies of singers  
 singed grass flash against stone  
 first x-ray charred image caught  
 outmaneuvered                      outnumbered

from initial cry a womb-echo embraces  
Liz Willis ranks among witches save us  
throaty asylum lives berserk footed  
every pipe in the place cracking bones  
he looks to the door

## Extraordinary Revivals of Pastime

for lason @ 36

Born  
 out a sonnet-patch  
 you pick it up  
 Milton's "soul-animating strains"  
 sicken you  
 no "corn-law" rhymers  
 you believe nobody  
 plagued by The Muses  
 gets off guilt-free  
 you attempt the 'sonnet'  
 but hesitate  
 at calling for  
 mounting Pegasus  
 w/o bridle or saddle  
 you delight in a broad blue looking glass sky  
 riding edges of badger-baiting belatedness  
 what Clare  
 unlearns in stride you discover  
 meritmeasure  
 life's fullness at cross purposes  
 such rhetoric aligns  
 anew  
 & w/ Suckling & Herrick  
 cast off "pouncing rhymes"  
 entering these rooms of solitary  
 contemplation's design

## ODE

Not to know clear-headed passing  
with declarative false toot  
" I am man . I am a painter " I am not  
taking in taking anything you may want  
I'm not attempting that understand  
reading round in Rimbaud kicked at  
scruffed up rocks spread throughout  
nothing so forced as inescapable  
not yes no yes yes no no all or nothing  
you'll stay or go moving from inner  
to outer without opening up a thing  
onwards to arrive sitting atop side stairs  
overcast mist shroud encased muggy kept  
& bearable even missed after as words  
will do by surprised reflection shining back  
window lights of our bedroom off neighbor's  
" I don't want to exist in their way "  
that way oh Joan Mitchell

# Patrick James Dunagan



## Life & Friendship

*I was wrong and when I knew how I was wrong  
I knew, What in a way, I had known all along  
- Delmore Schwartz*

A reputation of Failure:  
poet young & brilliant—  
poet crazy & dying.

"What I did once I can do again."  
 Story not of collapse but persistence,  
 possesses, but does not know.  
 There can be no awareness  
 of loss brought on by transcendence  
 else there is no transcendence.

Scales tipped, life falls apart.  
Tracing lyrical movements, his sonnets,  
though better, lack ideas of discovery.

Transition teaches acceptance of change  
 "poetry is experience, not truth."  
 Deadmen in graveyards envisage their youth  
 describe what knowledge comes to  
 continuing in crisis the writing  
 "what we had been before and were no more."

Compressed, stylized, happiness  
turns out beautiful to someone else  
rather than yourself.

Only in desire do we exist.  
Alive things look less neat,  
mimesis, not argument; interest in failure.  
Dissonant and metropolitan,  
occasionally wrought with brilliance,  
a kind of earnestness.

Paddle bubble gum, & fondle businessmen.  
Intricate dissection of a lively mind,  
not cheerful yet complete.

## The Apocalyptic's Farewell

*Someone said the self is dead, she said herself.*  
- Amy King

There's no balance when the sky's rent  
no foraging worth the toil when all's coming to an end

somebody said something galactic  
wasn't it you with leprosy and remorse

backed out the door? This city is queued up  
there's a gathering unseen beyond the clouds

although the ends never justify the means  
it's only we wilt a little further every time

as bound to stir things up a bit we're forgotten  
split second crash to leaden our paths upon

right fortune setting the tone we're expected  
nine removes away task by task settling the score

incoming from on high greeted gingerly below  
blocks of surfeit humdingers summoned long ago

comes to this: we're here but for the moment  
between states of having and not in the instant

all the mirages traveled through all thoughts  
of being rather there than here things sought

many hours of wishes and that prayer habit  
all now to go away and us with it

## Poetry

for Garrett

is lint  
aflame has no life  
knows only quickly passing death

happens rare if ever  
bursting forth bareback upon  
phoenix'd salamanders or else  
fades quicker than anything

you never recognize  
swallowing it whole  
territories are eclipsed within  
its maw

Walkie-talkie

K Operative:

“ a ghost thing like love”

it comes to visit

& is there,

then floats away

as if

nothing ever happened.

Only to return again,

familiar, yet never seen before

un-invited

& totally welcom’d.

Realer and more vapid than

a dream --

vaped up

on

“joy” which is “the essence of success”

or so my fortune cookie tries to tell me.

Weight of the Gamble

Bird coasts from one tree to a higher one  
Looks like it might not make it and does  
This always trying to win and not knowing  
Worshipping the machine, its loud & continuous sound  
Like we wear clothes in the hopes of hiding ourselves  
Performers’ empty smiles lost deep within the din  
While clowning at the moon,  
Predicting names and numbers  
Hoping in time  
These will all play out, we may end up  
Broke after all is said and done  
Or a bit richer for having tried  
And lost a lot but walking away  
Here, a new old dime on our hands.

On the subject of “naturalness”

Memorable underprivileg’d classes  
Hard to spell in spite of all this  
When Keats speaks of nightingales  
*You look so good against my mirrors*  
Flannel shirt hits just so as his hand hits hip  
At sunset all the birds say : *Catherine Keener*  
*Catherine Keener*  
*Catherine Keener*

while the Future’s stupid robotic nurses  
look like yesterday for a different reason,  
Dear Alexandria,

Crickets for Salina

They cancelled the storm  
We understood there  
To be  
A lot of space & places  
To arrange things –  
When I used to  
Put them  
beside your bed, you’d say  
*Daddy, they sound just like the ocean.*

Christina Fisher



Yet Another Index

A conveyer belt of teeth  
The shark’s mouth opens  
Wide & very thoroughly.

from All My Jewelry

From all my jewelry  
I could make of

These a stubborn dream  
yr toy boat afloat on my purple sea,  
All remedial: “you & me”  
Floating while we  
Sing a song  
About eroding all those boulders  
Into sand  
We walk along, hold my hand,  
Then cling alone to me,  
Or hang here  
    verso  
    brilliantly

The Voice of Shark Week

In the beautiful sad of a quiet grey evening  
This calculated golden aloneness shining to the touch  
Without thought or regret or breath even  
But bated and wanting and made new in its  
Need for whatever that was that made me  
Do what you told me to do.

So foreign, so strange, so known: Index

What the fuck does the future look like  
Fuchsia flowers grow on trees around here  
Pink spoon bills sift water with grace beaks  
Pelicans are penguins in paradise  
Smell of jasmine and fresh cut grass

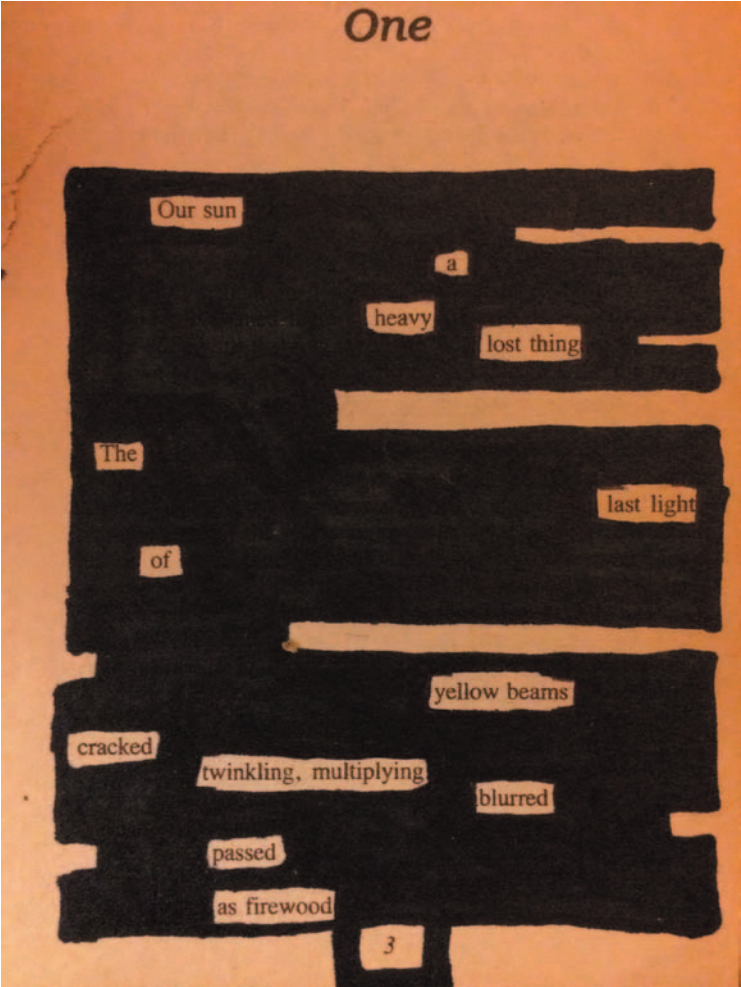
Gold Standard

In between days  
It felt like I was walking  
On clear mountain air  
While the red lights  
Of the 2 owls’ eyes  
Watched over our river  
Looking back at us, both  
Of them alive  
    In that sense of  
Dark Bejewelment

On the Wings of Mercury

Something about horses  
a Thinker’s lament –  
Is this ‘really’ happening  
Or has it ‘already’ happened;  
If so, why am I still  
‘holding on to it’ ?





## Sarah Griff

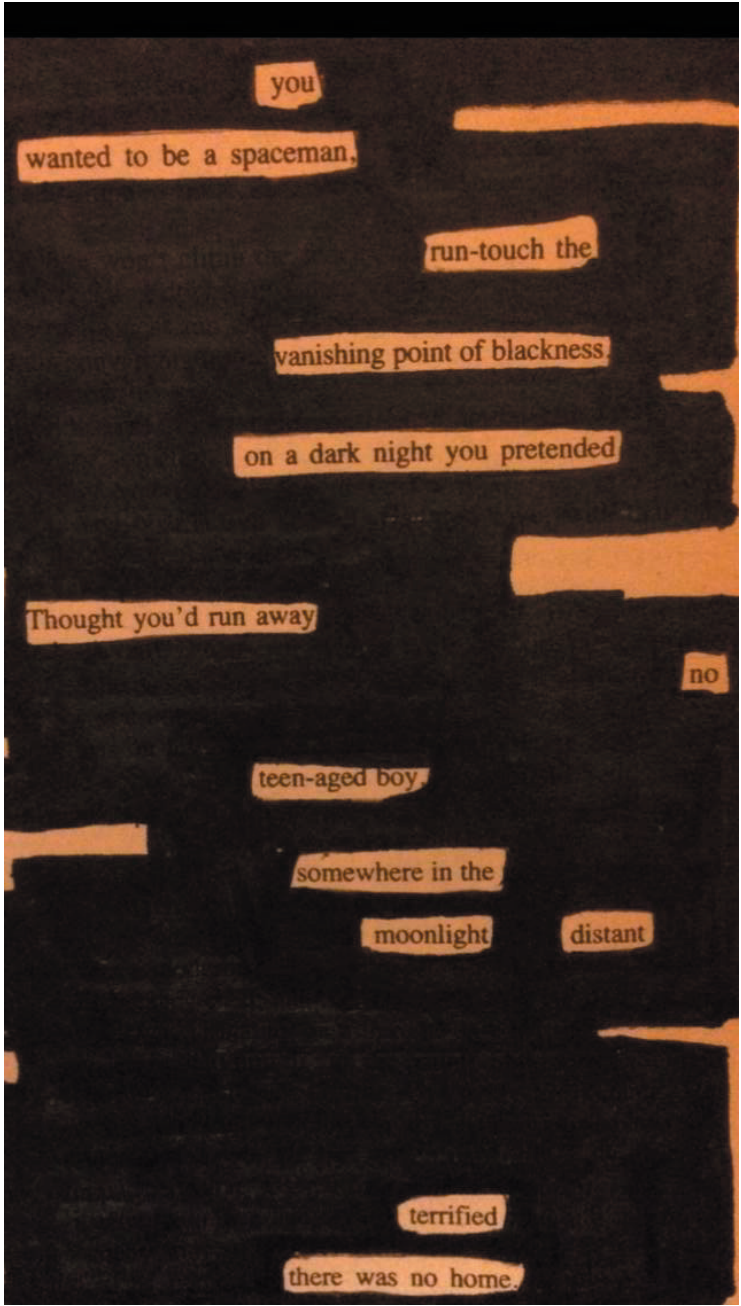


### Aspirational Fanfiction About Clothing I Can Not Afford: 3

Look, there’s this woolly jumper made by The Orphan’s Arms. It’s black. No surprises there, everything I like is mostly black, but get this, it has a pattern of white rabbits knit into it with the word ‘FOLLOW’ below every rabbit. I know what you’re thinking. Like follow the white rabbit, like Alice in Wonderland right? Wrong. Wrong, there will be no talking flowers or hearts or flamingos—not today, not in this sweater as I nip by the butchers to pack up a half pound of shrimp for me lunch. The small domestic bunny from the backyard next door, eyes wide, has trailed me down the street, hopping as I take a step, poor, hypnotized, impressionable dope. I stand at the butchers counter and go, half a pound of the cooked shrimp yeah the big ones nice one and go about my business. The bunny sits outside with its neck cocked curiously to the side, waiting on me, oozing adoration. I turn me back and put me shrimp into me tote and I’m off but before I can hear the door swing behind me and the butcher (the cute skinny butcher with the mustache and tattoos) screams bloody murder. Three of the rabbits that had been strung in the window, skinned and eyeless, have wrung themselves free and stand on their hind legs on the floor behind me, as I walk they loom forward like, mother, mother, we’ll come with you wherever you go –

### Aspirational Fanfiction About Clothing I Can Not Afford: 1

Look, there’s this black shirt that arrived in today on Forever21.com. It’s short in the front and long in the back and sleeveless with sort of sheer fabric but listen, it’s got these sharks all over it. Wide-mouthed, starving vicious sharks all over the shirt. They are cartoon blue like the sky in the morning and their mouths are red and fleshy and their teeth are starving for something alive and they swim in the seventeen dollar blackness of the fabric, they are in deep space, they are in the unreachable blackness of the sea. I will drape myself in this seventeen dollar thing and wear this black ocean of sharks on my body and feel them gnaw and chew until a thirst for meat is all I have, until they and me are not so unlike after all. When you turn your back my skin flushes blue like theirs and my teeth grow in fresh arcs in my mouth and long slits for gills open in my throat, a sharp triangular fin blossoming from my spine. Duh-nuh. Duh-nuh. Duh-nuh—I will be hungry for the red in your body. You will need a bigger boat –



### Origin Story

the first time someone told me that i’m frightening when i’m angry  
i laughed but the rage in my belly is bright thing  
the newness of it sharp – i’ve been waiting for this electricity forever  
it showed up at the door of me – my heart translucent – a ghost muscle  
it spark-grinned – wild eyed a holy terror  
it brought just one word – the word was fury



From *Vibratory Milieu*

ALL I WANT IS WHAT I CAN USE AND BEND.  
There are limits to the enthusiasm that you can express.  
We all play the fool sometimes.  
An ocean in here.  
In a general sort of way.  
What the narrator cannot fully recall.

Reality is a music.  
Relegated to a life of horror.  
The less we say about it the better.  
a memory leaking  
There are theories.  
God is not permission.

Its a throwing toward and pulling back simultaneously.  
It was time to take a look at everything that I’d been taught to believe.  
You have such precise thoughts.  
I’m not surprised, but someone somewhere might be surprised.  
Before the inferno, I had a light heart.  
Time as we know it but time, muted.

HOW WINDOWS ARE INEXORABLY BOUND UP WITH TIME.  
The California deluge was caused by an atmospheric river.  
All that was left of my relatives.  
So angry at trash.  
The time lock is engaged.  
One’s identity being not knowing one’s identity.

The voyage to the nuthouse being a spiraling voyage upwards.  
Violence is not the way.  
Not a job, it’s an art.  
“There’s a woman down the street calling your name.”  
Have you noticed how nobody works anymore.  
My first purgatorial action is inertia.

I was here before when I was supposed to be here but I’m not supposed to be here now.  
mano a mano  
I suspect that sadness is not compatible with sadness.  
Everyone is smiling today.  
Turbines primed.  
Reasons why authenticity fails.

THERE IS NO YOU HERE AND THERE IS NO WANT.  
Changing their communication practices.  
This is a terrible movie.  
Feeling extremely specific.  
Maybe because its such a common name.  
The attempted failed embrace’s parallel across texts.

When immigrants come, they bring their food.  
Not my year.  
Trees, blue skies, and a bumblebee.  
I have nothing to hide.  
Assimilation being the reason for your presence (t)here.  
Beyond kinky.  
I didn’t think I’d go to Starbucks to watch the inauguration.  
I don’t make good tea.  
The difficulty of fully absorbing any emotional experience and so you live in fragments.

No fast growth region stays that way forever.  
I needed some alone time, so I took the stairs.  
I have never had a life of habits.  
If it goes wrong there is no backup.  
[thunderclap]  
Looking into our hearts is maybe not looking deep enough.

Alone and not just in the economic sense.  
Nightgown on stairway’s descent.  
A rewriting of King Lear but without Shakespeare’s characters, plot, or language.  
The trace left behind of things that have been lost.  
[goose honks]  
Fear saves us every time.  
dizzy  
The context situated just slightly outside the poem.

Carrie Hunter



Your Spenserian Heart

Allusions to bridges. Moonbled in the moonlight. Heliotrope the stone, heliotrope the flower. “Accursed be a cowardly and covetous heart.” But shoes, nickels, fodder, a knack for ugly. Cakes and cages. However munched I used to be left with ears and coils, abandoned pencils, leaflets, requests for food. Toffee, a measure of corn, salutations. Her name a tear. Your Spenserian heart. The first sin or the fairest. That’s the ark.

Superarchaized

Our linguistic vision. Sense as in senses, sense as in wit. “The sounds will take care of themselves.” Every word here worth 240 regular words. The number of enigmatic silences. In contrast to reality. Reading that which derides me. History doubling is history repeating. “A silence makes a scene.” The double vs the cyclic. What I never mind that I should and what I do that I shouldn’t. How we left the glacier. The flagpatch quilt covering. Blotched with ink. My blurry vision.

Twelve Aural Illusions

How much later we arrive, eating. Chocolate is no longer the password. As if with a shovel. Music is no longer the password. Twelve aural illusions. Resembling mud. Mural immured miraged, is listening. Apricot is no longer the password. Engaged with the blurry, glasses off with it. After all, Jesus’s pizza, and after all, location sublime. Our point of reference is here. Prehistoric giants, a megalithic tomb. The Incas, or an incubus. What we used to be. That we are in location.

Finnegan Himself

On our isolated hill. Back in the bedroom looking at the fire. St. Michael slaying the dragon. What radio station call letters spell out. In the mausoleum wall, sure, but tell me what of lime? Finnegan himself. A short musical flourish with trumpets. Light converted into sound. Being in order to manifest. List, list, O list! The acoucryptophone, which picked up vibrations from a piano being played in another room, appearing to play itself. The lier is the one who lies down. The Four Old Men begin what they will begin. Pre-tumbling lichen forever olives.

The Historoiorum

Because she is only wearing one shoe. The opposite of conchord. As though this history has been inherited. Underneath where Herodotus lay. A composite character representing the four evangelists. Inside the violin, inside the variorum. Unreadability’s fragments. Such initialisms. The cloud we tell when to tell. The future that is. The four predictions predicted by the four historians. One is the unitary and I can’t speak anything more.

Against Knowability

Had a wicked wish. I turn it up because I hear the sky. The self to be sold, to be sound, to be given as sound. Your laugh after kissing. The dark sweat’s mightier than the light. Quickening is kicking. The moon between two bright stars, the moon between Venus and Mars. Then the supermoon, supermoon. We are floating somewhere between heaven and earth, we were floating somewhere. Our humid skin, together. A wet dryness on a wet dryness. In our little language, laughing. Poppet ravished. Where the heat met the frost. Coital gap. Antediluvius.



Tunitas

I.

The videos of my mind are sea cold running  
runny nosed to land's end dried grass shines  
to final light where froth and bird babble my  
ambition melting in it

II.

Came upon the frogs conducted a chorus  
could hear the ribbuts change with my arms  
the boy crept to the reeds and their sound did  
not change I broke a stick or I didn't because  
he wanted to be the change I let him

III.

sun is was on  
the rocks the fossils  
are in the rocks I am  
was with the fossils  
sun is in my mind

IV.

Make a game up the road hid when  
headlights but the cars go so fast crouching  
in the brush can they see my knees white  
shoes their speed suspicious of myself if they  
saw me they'd know

maybe a girl  
in the backseat sees  
says there's a body  
parents say that's absurd  
she believes them  
she doesn't

Crossed the road hid on the slope a tree the  
soil crumbled as I stepped a little the boy in  
the tree could see everything I watched the  
cars this branch is so strong he stood on it  
bowed we ran

Jordan Karnes



V.

The boy says let your legs go we go downhill like a dog  
I tried I did already was doing out of breath a car we  
walked we walked let them see us walking do they think  
we're trouble fighting peeing loving

lines  
comb to  
shore current  
cuts  
to sea

VI.

The boy in wind the sticks the water changed them left  
them I think I hear an animal it's always the sticks wind  
through them we break some make swords carve sound  
in the wind snap I have a dagger now

VII.

Bird flying in place boy bounding over planes sun  
sunk the sky glow the water milk

Jordan Karnes is an Aries and a regular contributor to *Actual People Quarterly*. Her first collection, *It Hasn't Stopped Being California Here* was recently published by Carville Annex Press.

Item Not As Described

In bold tones of air  
or rather plain speech  
loose-limbed silence, in  
Life rife w progress bars

Fucking shaking fit  
mode change  
NASDAQ GPS NATO  
I allow myself to seem  
Completely dead  
rather than actually wounded, as I am  
My Par Avion knowledge  
on the atlas  
split dirty head

in movable type or half-wiped off  
dry erase boards the mistake  
compounds itself into  
A practice  
at play at clarity in words  
Brought up to line level

Spoon in one hand spatula in  
the other  
then drumming all over the kitchen

Now that it doesn't matter anymore  
the writing isn't bad & comes  
easy. There was something else  
I meant to say about that of course  
now I can't remember what it was

a dab of gore  
to stiffen the  
heap

Swimming Ground

The problem  
at the start of  
the problem

How  
you think you  
feel

Right Temporo  
Parietal Junction

Warranted or  
no, let

Faith w/ no object—  
intransitive  
faith

(it's  
an example  
of this)

a move in scenes  
of life is  
the shape of & light  
through a waterglass

Jason Morris



Pinwheel

Thinking it  
prefigured, ie.,  
the normal or  
correct way  
Of wrong

Alaska roll at mikado w/ This  
Time We Are Both  
Napkin neatly folded  
& stained, almost none of  
my beer (still cold) beside my  
shades & self—

as soon as I write it  
I can no longer  
explain. Quantum Mechanics  
gum & a leaf making  
Saturn on the street

I decided it's what  
I'd do  
since it's what I  
started doing.

First  
you learn  
how to clearly

Build  
dark  
in  
then  
you relearn  
how to stop

The Delays

Sunglasses. My  
self elsewhere  
Exact myths like these

Mysteriously summoned to this  
orderly place  
where fluid shadows bend & attract  
poured concrete floors & planters  
a luckless world  
mutely aligned

scattered songs that lend me  
into the rent, with borrowed  
strength—or space to expand

in their  
negativity

these all the delays  
which I reach out my hand about,  
correct  
in retrospect. Never each other  
never reach one another—

my  
sub-  
conscious brings  
home  
a new girl-  
friend

to introduce  
her

to my conscious  
mind

Not Grist But Prism

Home's heaped  
in nouns, Out-  
side swarms with verbs

"days in the maze"  
although in the midst of it  
There I was, able to slip back  
into  
the real situation—there is never  
enough time to think

to build a peripherally known  
thing  
out of hand-delivered  
coincidental pieces  
interlocking  
myriad  
Something so delicate it is imperative  
should never be forced but rather be  
given:  
to take place—

the ones they use as examples are  
rarely typical  
it's always more the other way  
so long as care

& a certain readiness permit  
looking closely



## from Dead larch, bare

yes, to cold fallen snow that feeds  
 yes, to rock hollows solid and still  
 yes, to water, acrid and wet, the water of  
     fallow winter that drowns heavily away  
     as a single black husk sinks clumsily to rise  
     wherever

yes, to those and all of those,  
 less than the rain, feeding,  
 freezing your indifference,  
     my stranger – o all less  
     than you, waiting nowhere

you heard in Montana a dead larch fall  
 crowded in a forest it fell and the air around it  
     rose from the leaves  
 with all the forest it died  
     dull bark of black and grey  
 and its sound, soft and ethereal, spiritual, made  
     you think of yourself

but you knew that its sad cracking branches  
     lying among so many of its kind  
     surrounded by friends –  
 for you did not know  
 you could not  
 and you did not touch its bark even  
 but left it there intact

remind yourself of your enemies (for you never think  
     of them)  
 yet it is left to you a banal gift  
 it makes you feel that weak indifference  
 for none of that and the dead larch  
     lying there in Montana, in the forest  
     hills, silently despondent branches  
     at the moment of its death, surrounded by  
     friends – you don't know that you could

When you saw at dawn how you  
     had suffered gossip in jail  
     still it was a joyful morning  
     for you

And when you wept and when what  
     you dreaded happened you were  
     not happy

But that night when you fell at dusk  
     toward the window of disease  
     damp, exhaling sour phlegm

When you heard the eclipsed sun in the east shrink  
     red and reappear in the evening dim

When you marched in a crowd to the city  
     donning armor, dirty, screaming with the  
     fumes, avoiding dawn

And when you felt your enemy (how you feared one!)  
     was leaving then o you were sad  
 One cough felt sharp and all that night your  
     drink sapped you more  
 and the ugly night stayed badly

And the next night came with different sadness and with  
     the next at dawn came your enemy  
 And that day while all was abuzz you saw the fire  
     spike quickly up the buildings  
 You saw the walls crumble as random to you, shouting,  
     to condemn you for the enemy you fear  
     screamed in your face  
 In the chaos her back turned to you, while  
     The sun's hazy glow  
     Beat down and her leg pressed heavily  
     Under your back and that day you were afraid

That period, as you stood in the crowd, demanding and  
     passionate, it was to you as with other women  
     in other waters demanding and passionate  
 It was to you as if you could hear them in Guatemala,  
 Cuba,  
     Egypt, or Pakistan, Tibet, Burma, listening  
     in the same language  
 And it was to you, as if you could not know those  
 women  
     that you should fear them as you fear women in  
     your own waters

## Nico Peck



It was to you, as if we were ignorant, ugly, hateful,  
 as if in nameless waters  
 O you feel they should be sisters – you feel you should  
     not be afraid of them.

Today you felt that simplicity would not satisfy you  
 O if you could but give away simplicity!  
 Then the waters of the mountains  
 Of the northern peaks  
 for them you would die  
 You would be their listener

Then you met the young and worn-out “traitors”  
 You saw the prisoners, farmers,  
 and all their fearful bodies  
 And it was clear to you that you also did not have  
 it in you  
 To be fearful  
 as one and it  
 would not be

And then  
 to begin nothing  
 it went to you  
 To end the scream of the Old World  
 and then  
 You knew your death must not be wasted screaming

But then how to ignore the waters of the mountains  
 Waters of the northern peaks, California's waters...?

Ignore, my Pacific shores and my Mount Tam, and all that with  
 me slides away from Yosemite, and my Yosemite, too?

And my Kansas plains...?

For you can be my screamer of screams forever.  
 You have always disdained them.  
 You have lost the one who fears you as you her in imperfect fear.

With everyone you gather.  
 You connect to all that you feel would not satisfy you.  
 For it does.  
 For it was full and delicious to you.

You ignore stupidity and the pretensions of the academy and the  
     cowards, forever.

You heed your own silence.  
 You are to stay with her that you fear and she is to stay with you.  
 It is insufficient for one of you that you are apart.  
 You will break up again and again.

What feel I that you have tossed away your pencil  
 to forget?

Not the bicycle, rusty, humble, that you heard last night leave in  
 the dark swerving...

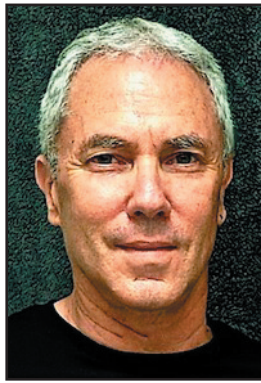
Nor the drabness of tomorrow nor the drabness of the day that  
 eludes you nor the loss  
 and decay of the nameless forests behind you, but the thousands  
 of old women I heard last night in the cave, gathering the  
 gathering of strangers, the many who leave letting go of their  
 hands and walking into the shadows ...

O you liars of the future!  
 When I erase you, heart not so much  
 nor listen to yourself  
 that you did not foresee the forests  
 and brought us to this confusion of shame.

Go away.

You will know that I was not above that violent interior.  
 You will hear what I heard of you.

# Aaron Shurin



## Omit the Mouth

*Omit the mouth that answers*, like a mindless boner in your face, or a jug-eared boy in the second row waving frantically, “Pick me!” The art is surrender; be stupid and small. In spring I carried my father’s limp body to the river’s edge where he tried, as ever, to part the shallows. Omit his answer but keep the question: How do you make the river’s hair stand up? *I* prefer to watch the trees; their hair I understand though the parts are sere and the bark so long to learn. In summer I loved a willowy boy with a mouth like a hoot owl, an ass like a barn owl, a smile like a horned owl: every part was open at night as he fed on slumber and I surrendered. My mother is a river, *was* a river, the water is old but the form is new. Never presume. Submerge. The water is cold but the form is blue. Your mother is clearer than the shallows in fall and wholly interrogative: The water shimmers and parts; she walks right in. The sport is surrender; omit the question, the worry, the brain, the gender, the judge, the wow, the wonder, the frame, the fret, the ground, the slant, the spin. In winter the snowy owls merged with the field in a gasp of white. Your hair stood up; you staggered, threw out your arms. Omit the circle of stupor, the awe. I cut off my head and walked right in.

## In the Interval

*To leap and stomp in the dark*, to shake the Willis out: in his purple boxers in the hall in the shadow of the streetlight and the rhythm of the rain – not like a dancer, not like a demi-god, not a yogi or a muscle-queen before a mirror – in his flannel shorts with a beach-ball pattern – hypnogogic whorls – in his black socks and no shirt, in his skin and hair and too much sweat in his effort towards levitation in his sack of self cavorting, to break the frame, the guide-line, the pitcher of decorum, the holding glass, to crack the measure and the beat for the feel of zero or the counter of the wheel in his clumsy turns in his search for grace in the very early morning in the interval extended in his earnest arabesque in his sense of order looping out of place in his changes and his quest for change on his axis in his small house with its pine floor where he leaped and stomped in the dark...

## Smoke

What did I say, what did it mean, ribbons of ink – *luxé* spawning – how did it work, did it work, what did he think – shield me – what did I want, what do I want, flicked it off – flux you – cradled his head in the ebb of a smooth piano run – what was the mood – sleep – an inversion of talk – grinding away at the air – chambered glances or no glances stalled in the half-light – who did it favor, who did it shatter – walled up in his hoodie and jeans – the skimpy blankets, the skimpy tissue of night, waking and waking, how many times in the no-light, the one more night, the one night...

## The Majestic

She was patient. She watched the walls slide and the floor recede, the windows tremble in the casements and start to warp – (*time passes*, in dependent clauses) – the apples bloomed and swelled up and fell with a thud... She had equanimity, she hummed as she held out her fingers like a surveyor and caught the sun in the crook – *medieval* – and sketched a new town raised on planetary transits and the grand arcs of stars, shadows that formed and fell like letters in sequence as the breeze blows – what was a town, a house, a room of sliding walls, a tidal floor that slipped, what was a window *in* or a window *out* and was there a third window...? One strand of cat hair twirled in the air like a propeller – *majestic consequence*, she thought, of one strand, one day... She felt proportion – in a tight pony tail and wind-ruffled skirt like the froth of afternoon, with trees for walls, and leaves twittering like sparrows and the breeze as clear as light – *time passes* – or at the big kitchen table – *medieval* – counting the books cracked open on the floor – *majestic consequence* – in her fuzzy slippers where the sun fell on the polished wood like a ball gown spread out in her pink bathrobe in the froth in the oscillating orders of her ever-constant ever-fluctuating house...

## Revery

Then age with that grabby fist... Then age with that dry tongue... Then age with its white eyes... I was lying on the couch, bucketed in a hollow of the cushions so deep I was almost submerged (then age with its aqueous shoes) in a vision of M, his thick eyelashes fanned-out like a ball gown... in a framed Mexican afternoon where no breeze blew but our breaths, drifted up the pink walls and fluttered the curtains by the lemon tree where the birds sang in the no-wind and the birds sing in the no-time... then age with its numbered lists, its anyway grin... Was it morning or night? – the sofa wouldn’t say – fluttering my half-closed eyes – then me with my golden torpor, then me with my somnolent cheer like a boy nursing an all-day sucker or a boy with a sighing puppy in his lap... then me in the tidal pull and draw of a low-slung couch, aloft or adrift it wouldn’t say as the birds floated by...

Aaron Shurin’s (<http://jacket2.org/interviews/inhabiting-both-sides>) most recent books are *Citizen*, a collection of prose poems, and *King of Shadows*, a collection of personal essays, both from City Lights Books.

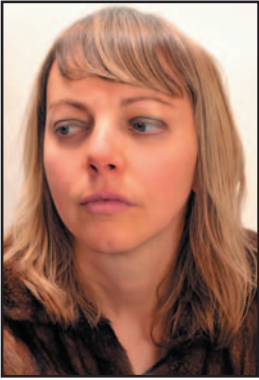


varieties of cruelty

cruelty to men

It seems cruel not to break up with a man she does not love, and it seems cruel to break up with him over the telephone without looking at his face, but it seems even crueler to keep their date and ride out to the cliffs with the dogs they are each dogsitting for and then break up with him there at the cool edge of the earth with the dogs looking up at them confusedly. She must do it now on the phone when her resolve is firm and do it once sharply like a jab with a sword. A few days later it seems cruel not to answer the phone when he wishes to talk, just as it seems like a cruelty to herself not to consider her whole range of feelings; it seems cruel not to go see him in person. Their bodies feel good together when they hug in his tiny kitchen, and he has softened in his anger—just the fact of her coming to see him is enough to soften his anger—and she has softened in her resolve not to be with him. Whereas on the phone he said he could never trust her again, now he says he will be with her if that is what she wants. Has he already forgotten her cruelty, or is he capable of forgiving it so soon, and does this make him stupid, or extraordinarily good? It does not seem cruel to lie in his bed with him, spooning, when they are too tired to continue the conversation. It does not seem cruel in the morning when, after some coaxing and a cup of coffee, she lets him give her head and then climbs on top of him and they fuck like a pair of efficient scissors, trimming away the past, forgetting it may lead to more cruelty in the future.

Sarah Fran Wisby



cruelty to women

A new girl was hired on at the co-op, and she was well-endowed with dimples and young skin, and had a tendency at work parties to laugh mellifluously and to fall as if drunk into the waiting laps of male co-workers who already had girlfriends at home, or maybe even standing next to them, and we women of the co-op who could no longer properly be called girls hardened ourselves against her as if she were a virus it was up to us to starve since the men obviously weren't going to do it. Even when we found out she had a mother who was dying of various cancers in a cold and barren northern province, and was perhaps in dire, secret need of the kindness of women, we found ourselves unable to be kind to her, though we had all more or less been her at one time or another, and were happy when she eventually began to look more pale, more tired, less pretty, less happy, more worn, more fearful, more like us.

cruelty to friends

I certainly know by now that I am my own worst enemy, and since you have chosen to ally yourself with me, that makes you my enemy too.

cruelty to strangers

Just look at them, all the people we do not care to know. How stupid they look, going about their commute, driving ugly late-model cars to boring jobs we have no desire to hear about. Inevitably we end up next to one of them at a cocktail party, someone's cousin or coworker. The worst thing about them is not how boring they are, but how they make us, who had hoped to be so interesting, seem boring too.

cruelty to houseplants

We were smoking on the porch and he said, It seems you are trying to kill that plant but to its credit it doesn't want to die. I said, Why is it to its credit that it doesn't die when I wish it were dead so I could throw it away? It's as if it's thumbing its nose at me, its would-be killer. He touched the crumbling leaves which were so abhorrent to me and said, For your sake I hope it dies soon. Then he said, not at all gloating but as if to comfort me, In my room I have a plant that seems to require no water, no sunlight, seems to ask for nothing at all. We went into his room to look at the plant, a tall, thick profusion of snake green stalks. It did seem a noble thing, and I said, Now that is a plant I could respect. A few weeks later, his plant did die, perhaps from mortification at being gazed at. My plant, on the porch, however, continued to live in a wretched state for quite some time.

cruelty to animals

I am glad that fruit fly, who was being such a nuisance, has drowned. But did he have to drown in my wine glass?

Sarah Fran Wisby (<http://www.sarahfranwisby.com/>) is the author of *Viva Loss* and *the heart's progress*. She is at work on a novel.



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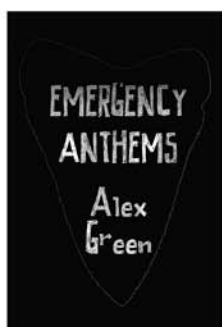


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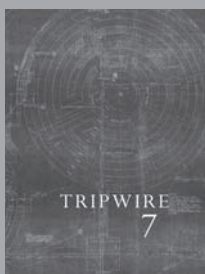
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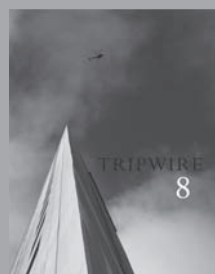
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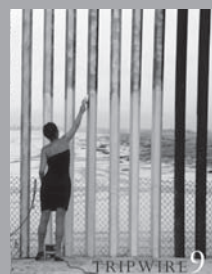
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http://www.eteladnan.com/

http://douglaspiccinnini.blogspot.com/

http://www.nightboat.org/

## Bios

**Etel Adnan** is the author of numerous books of poetry and prose, including the ground-breaking novel *Sitt-Marie Rose*. She is a recipient of a 2010 PEN Oakland-Josephine Miles National Literary Award. Her paintings and texts were included in documenta 13 in Kassel, Germany, in 2012. In spring 2013, the CCA Wattis in San Francisco mounted the first retrospective of her visual work. She lives between Sausalito, Calif. and Paris.

**Patrick James Dunagan** lives in San Francisco and works at Gleeson Library for the University of San Francisco. His writings have appeared in: *1913: a journal of forms*, *Amerarcana*, *American Book Review*, *Big Bell*, *Bookslut*, *Chain*, *Dusie*, *Entropy*, *Fulcrum*, *Haarp*, *HTMLGiant*, *Lightning'd Press*, *Rain Taxi*, *Shampoo*, *The Portable Boog Reader*, *The Rumpus*, *The Volta*, *Wild Orchids*, and *Your Impossible Voice*. His most recent books include *GUSTONBOOK* and *Das Gedichtete*.

**Douglas Piccinnini** is the author of the forthcoming novella, *Story Book* (The Cultural Society). His first full-length collection of poems, *Blood Oboe*, will appear from Omnidawn Publishing in the fall. His writing has appeared or will soon appear in *Aufgabe*, *Lana Turner*, *So & So*, *The Seattle Review*, *The Volta*, and *Verse*, among other publications.

## PRINTED MATTER

# The Ever Eccountable, Inexplicably Accurate Poetry of Duncan McNaughton



BY PATRICK JAMES DUNAGAN

**Tiny Windows**

Duncan McNaughton  
Auguste Press

The business of poetry is not about consumption. Easily manipulatable, language makes excellent ad copy but poems call for evocation of darker, for muddier streams of communication. It is the work of exploring the under-said fabric where imagination expresses itself. Language is the poet's heavily resistant tool. The "dangerous toy" poet Anselm Hollo called it. Harnessing language for poetic means requires taking on responsibility for the presentation of the world thereby offered. It requires you to always be held accountable. Ever aware of these factors, poet Duncan McNaughton operates under a self-imposed set of directives wary of being misrepresented and/or the work otherwise suffering understatement.

Nils Ya's essay "I am a child: poetry after Robert Duncan and Bruce Andrews" quotes McNaughton from unidentified source material that must now be at least 30 years old and gives a vivid impression of the poet's outlook concerning the contemporary poetry scene which remains valid, if not more so, to this day:

"In the endeavor to reveal simply decent potentialities of human association, poetry in the U.S. plays no other part than a recreational one, an ornament in its success to the structures of brute force; and in its failure only its uselessness comes across. It is the poets themselves, and no one else, who are responsible for the utter compromise of the vocation. I am one of them."

Or, as McNaughton writes in his poem "3-D"  
[...] You want to masquerade as a poem?  
Then put on a banal cap and stand next  
to the corpse. Like so.

In person, McNaughton's no bullshit attitude might easily be mistaken for old man gruffness and that's probably perfectly okay by him, but when it is apprehended on the page—where his poems have a penchant for giving off a "fuck you" attitude to readers—he leaves nothing to be mistaken. As he writes in "News, to Me":

If you are expecting poetry to  
tell you something you can use, you better  
reconsider the wings on the poet's sandals  
and the rules of the game Elegua plays.

McNaughton presents a poetry which has nothing but possible disdain for how you feel about it. This isn't curmudgeonly affect or poetry for poetry's sake. McNaughton's no poet's poet. He's McNaughton's poet. His poems won't make you feel good. Don't expect a pleasant sense of compassionate appeal from them. But they also aren't interested in grotesque or exotic titillation either. The poems are exact to a minuscule degree. What needs be said gets said.

**Duncan McNaughton operates under a self-imposed set of directives wary of being misrepresented and/or the work otherwise suffering understatement.**

Of course there were gods.

There still are, gods don't go away. Heroes don't either because they are descendants of gods. At some point we come along, not gods, not heroes, unengaged by great Fate. Mystified. You'll have to take my word on that score. [...]

The personal for McNaughton is not a matter of day-to-day whimsical speculation. It isn't even personal to him. His poetry has no place for such a view of life. He doesn't see himself as better than anybody else, no further along the road of wonder and mystery than the next guy in line at the check-out. Speculation ain't his racket. Yet his reach encases elements of biographical perspective set in specific scenarios found within worldly contexts. That is, the concern of the poem remains with immediate ramifications of its utterance.

Mugham. Syrian  
if you know what that means, Iranian  
ditto, with older, farther Central  
Asianisms. Central Asia is a  
very large place. Deserts, mountains, vast  
terrain. There the human imagination  
has had a lot of room in which to think  
it over without much interference  
until recently. Periodic exceptions  
notwithstanding, the game is to have as  
much sympathetic knowledge of the world  
as one can find in oneself by affinity -  
the feeling of likeness. I guess it's rare  
that a single person can acquire  
total knowledge of that kind.

McNaughton's family stalk is Boston working class. He took a Ph.D. from SUNY Buffalo studying under the likes of Charles Olson and the phenomenal Blakean sonneteer John "Jack" Clarke—who was instrumental in getting McNaughton's very much a poet's dissertation on Shakespeare's Sonnets past the academic anti-poet Luddites in charge of granting such things. A young McNaughton worked a stint at the Wilentz brothers' infamous Eighth Street Bookshop in Manhattan. He also joined fellow poet Lewis MacAdams with the editing of the final lp issue of Mother magazine.

From Buffalo McNaughton headed west, landing in Bolinas just north of San Francisco where he soon started up his own epic small press mag Father. By the end of the 1970s he was teaching at a local small post-hippie start-up college in Marin and by 1980 with Louis Patler had founded the now defunct Poetics Program at the New College of California's newest campus in the Mission district of San Francisco. He's split his residence between San Francisco and Bolinas ever since. *Tiny Windows* is his most recent collection of poems in an increasingly steady run of small press publications since the late 1990s when he re-entered the publishing scene after a sustained absence. He's quite distinctly his own poet. Don't fuck with him.

## Our Real Home is Our Life: Reading Etel Adnan



BY DOUGLAS PICCINNINI

**To look at the sea is to become what one is: An Etel Adnan Reader**

Thom Donovan and Brandon Shimoda, eds.  
Nightboat Books

In "The Future of the Arabic Language," poet Khalil Gibran (1883-1931) states, "Language is but one manifestation of the power of invention in a nation's totality or public self. But if this power slumbers, language will stop in its tracks, and to stop is to regress, and regression leads to death and extinction."

At the onset of the 20th century—a century bound in testaments of imperialism that begat increased population, amplified industrialization, and rapid urbanization—experimentalism and invention rang through Modernity in a myriad of ways.

And, rising from the ashes of two world wars, the Middle East, like many parts of the world, began defining and redefining the geographical and intellectual boundaries of statehood.

Reza Azlan, in his introduction to *Tablet & Pen: Literary Landscapes from The Modern Middle East* notes that between 1910-1950 the "boundaries of the modern Middle East were carved" and "literature became a tool for forming national identities."

Born in Beirut, Lebanon in 1925, Etel Adnan grew up and out of the intersection of languages and cultures, of overlapping empires—influenced by Eastern and Western ideologies as well as what Cole Swensen calls "an overdetermined space" made up of "several languages, religions, media, genres, countries and cultures" that were "amassed in a personal history." Each, as Swensen notes, contained a vitality that were "radically reconfigured and recontextualized in her ideas and her creations."

Adnan's multivalent work as writer, artist, and essayist insists not only on the need for a "public self" but the actualization of a self through constant invention—within cultures, within languages.

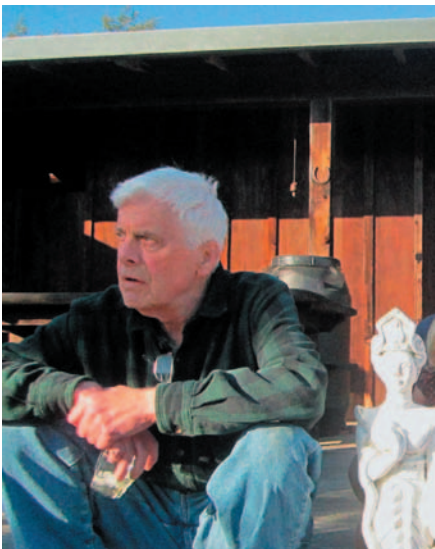
Regarding her early life, Adnan writes, "languages start at home" and "[m]y mother was a Greek from Smyrna, when Smyrna, before World War I, was a predominantly Greek city, a Greek speaking community within the Ottoman Empire. My father was Arab. He was born in Damascus, Syria."

Adnan was raised in languages. Her parents had Turkish as a common language, her father spoke Arabic, her mother spoke Greek. A young Adnan learned French, as it was the official language of her school days.

As a poet, the language of her expression reflects the experience of actualizing a selfhood through not only inherited language, but the possibility of expression within language(s). Aware of this perpetual negotiation, Adnan has, perhaps Romantically, claimed "poetry has nothing to do with words but it needs them."

In *To look at the sea is to become what one is*, Thom Donovan and Brandon Shimoda have pieced together a major retrospective of Etel Adnan's literary output in an impressive two-volume omnibus. As the author of works in English, Arabic, and French, *To look at the sea is become what one is* gestures towards Adnan's necessary inclusion in the canon of not only world literature but innovative writing.

With a range of work in theme, content, and style, Adnan's work dwells in a lifesea bigger than the self, possessing a radical awareness of potential and of possibility. And, it is this awareness that drives Adnan's compulsion to create. She writes, "I was disturbed in one fundamental realm of my life: the domain of meaningful self-expression." This collection is a record of the moveable wellspring of expression created not only by the "power of invention," as Gibran suggests, but in route toward a meaningful sense of self within a time and a place. And it is in poems, in paint, and in prose, that Adnan's "constant narrative" reveals "ultimately, our real home is our life."



**It is in poems, in paint, and in prose, that Adnan's 'constant narrative' reveals 'ultimately, our real home is our life.'**



Simone Fettel photo



# Rising from the Tome

## Writings from Cinematic Misfit George Kuchar



BY JOEL SCHLEMOWITZ

The George Kuchar Reader

Edited by Andrew Lampert

Primary Information

In a shooting stage in the film department of the San Francisco Art Institute a young woman holds a script in one hand, a cigarette in the other, and declaims to her antagonist “Harold, it wasn’t easy for me to come here tonight. To leave my apartment on 53rd Street in Manhattan. And you know what I’m talking about! Wipe that smirk off your face before I mash my shoe in it.” The antagonist in question is more scarecrow than mortal adversary, an upright cylindrical camera tripod case, shrouded in cloth, and with a bedraggled wig balanced on top. The impatient director runs out into the scene, “Keep it running, keep it running,” he lets the camera crew know, and proceeds to demonstrate the histrionic effect he is seeking. The students offscreen can be heard chortling with laughter as he taunts the chagrined, mop-like wig with the words, “When I cheat it’s not for sex!” He slides his hands up along his torso to cup his chest, “Make your hands go like this. When I cheat it’s not for sex!” “Oh George,” she informs him, her own laughter joining the laughter heard off screen, “I’m too embarrassed.”

George Kuchar was never too embarrassed. A faculty member at the San Francisco Art Institute for four decades, his course in moviemaking was a little Hollywood dream factory, the whole roster of students participating in the production of a comical, underground extravaganza of a film. It would invariably combine a slightly incompressible script, an assemblage of melodramatic orchestral selections on the soundtrack, and a dizzying profusion of no-budget visual inventiveness. The foregoing production, *I, An Actress*, is practically understated in comparison, but a prime opportunity to see the filmmaker at work in the studio.

George and his twin brother Mike grew up in the Bronx. Movie enthusiasts, they made their own subversive no-budget Hollywood-inspired melodramas, twisted love stories, and old time monster movies with an 8mm camera, casting friends and neighbors, and indulging in such special effects work as a Midwest cyclone created with plastic model scenery swirling in a fish tank. Their work was apparently not appreciated by the local 8mm amateur movie club. But an invitation to show their films as part of the underground art scene resulted in a lifelong affinity with the experimental film community.

Inasmuch as the brothers did not set out to make “experimental”

work, it’s tempting to draw comparison to the mad love for the Marx Brothers professed by the Surrealists, which involved such amorous missives as a never-produced feature-length screenplay by Salvadore Dali. While The Marx Brothers were mostly indifferent, the Kuchars reciprocated, transforming from amateurs into artists. Most importantly, they did so without sacrifice of the bombastic inventiveness and ebulliently demented humor which had originally brought them to this place of esteem. Describing the short film *Eclipse of the Sun Virgin* George wrote, “Painstakingly filmed and edited, it will be painful to watch, too.”

The brothers graduated from 8mm up to 16mm. Mike remained east, but George went west, to teach in San Francisco and churn out droll video diaries. He passed away in 2011, a loss much mourned by the film community.

Working in cinema, drawing and painting, writing, and in the creation of his numerous video diaries, George was a prolific artist. The work of the sibling Kuchar duo would inspire John Waters and others who would embrace the banality Hollywood camp, fusing it to an underground palette of taboo taste. While the brothers’ writing had previously been published in 1997 in the dual memoir *Reflections from a Cinematic Cesspool*, a charming

but awkwardly oblong book, a new collection of prose and drawings has now arrived in the form of *The George Kuchar Reader*, edited by filmmaker and archivist Andrew Lampert. It is a substantial, handsomely produced book, with a large percentage of material reproduced in facsimile, often in George’s assiduously composed cursive longhand. Lampert accounted for the decision to include so much material in its original form at a book release screening this August at Light Industry in Greenpoint, Brooklyn. “George’s writing is very easy to read. He had the handwriting of a fourth-grade schoolgirl,” Lampert explained.

Filled with wit, bombast, and weirdness, the book is a glorious glimpse into the Kucharian world of the filmmaker whose work includes such turgid titles as *Unstrap Me*, *Lust for Ecstasy*, *Hold Me While I’m Naked*, *The Naked and the Nude*, *Pussy on a Hot Tin Roof*, *A Tub Named Desire*, *I Was a Teenage Rumpot*, and *Knocturne*.

A list of “potential titles” for works of the Kucharian oeuvre found in the *Reader*, written out in George’s schoolgirl hand, includes “House of the She Men,” “Harmony for a Harlot,” “Hell is for Harlots,” and “The Devil’s Cleavage.” The last of these did indeed

become a Kuchar production. But how the imagination reels as we contemplate such unproduced works as “The Scarlet Schmatta,” “Satan’s Bowels,” “Venus Bowel Gas,” and “Heathens of Eden.”

Mischievous highlights, especially for those who toil in the academy, are the gloriously useless and wholly inappropriate letters of recommendation written for his students at the San Francisco Art Institute:

“Ashley was a student of mine for a period of time here at the Art Institute and I found her a very polite and delicate talent with a beautiful head of hair.”

“Not only is the man striking in physical appearance and height but he is also a finely tuned instrument for contracting the magic of cinema.”

“Vincent DeGiulio was a student of mine for one semester several years ago. He was a pint-sized powerhouse of formidable fortitude. Not only did he look good on camera; he was a dynamic doer behind it too!”

“Her brain seems to overflow with the kind of excitement generally reserved for periods of lunar fullness. Ms. Tsai is certainly a force to ogle and contemplate whether you are male or female. Her creative carnality serves all realms with equal doses of perverse perfection!”

There are more of these.

The book’s comprehensive wandering through George’s scripts, notes, essays, comics and drawing, clippings and reviews, correspondence regarding UFOs, and reminiscences, extends even into the zone of Kucharian marginalia. In document George has reminded the distributor of his videos though a note written in the corner, “Keep it underground and clandestine.” And throughout his prolific career he always did.



George Kuchar

Nancy Fink photo, courtesy Primary Information.

Link

<http://www.joelschlemowitz.com>

Bio

**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.



## Links

<http://www.krupskayabooks.com>

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<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/stephanie-young>

## Bios

**Brandon Brown** is the author of *The Persians* By Aeschylus (Displaced Press), *The Poems of Gaius Valerius Catullus* (Krupskaya Books), and *Flowering Mall* (Roof Books). Recent work has appeared in *Art Practical*, *Poems By Sunday*, *The Berkeley Poetry Review*, and *The Death and Life of American Cities*. He publishes small press materials under the imprint OMGI and lives in Oakland, Calif.

Dedicated to publishing experimental poetry and prose, **Krupskaya Books** is structured as a collective body comprised of writer-editors who have equal responsibility for the reading, selection, editing, and support of the books that are produced. The collective works toward a consensus.

**Morgan Parker** is the author of *Other People's Comfort Keeps Me Up At Night* (Switchback Books), selected by Eileen Myles for the 2013 Gatewood Prize; and *There Are More Beautiful Things Than Beyoncé* (Coconut Books, forthcoming). Her work has been featured or is forthcoming in numerous publications, including the anthology *Why I Am Not A Painter*, published by Argos Books. In 2013, she was a finalist for The Poetry Project's Emerge-Surface-Be Fellowship. A Cave Canem fellow, she lives in Brooklyn, NY, and works as education director at the Museum of Contemporary African Diasporan Arts and a poetry editor of *Coconut Magazine*. She also contributes writing to *WEIRD SISTER* and co-curates the Poets With Attitude reading series with Tommy Pico.

Born and raised in New York City, poet and editor **Jocelyn Saidenberg** is the author of several poetry collections, including *Negativity* and *Cusp*, which was chosen by poet Barbara Guest for the Frances Jaffer Book Award. Founding editor of the publishing collective Krupskaya Books and a founding member of the Nonsite Collective, Saidenberg has also served as director of Small Press Traffic Literary Arts Center and as curator for New Langton Arts. She lives in San Francisco, where she is a reference librarian for the San Francisco Public Library.

**Stephanie Young** lives in Oakland, Calif. Her collections of poetry include *Telling the Future Off*, *Picture Palace*, and *Ursula or University*. She edited the anthology *Bay Poetics* and is a founding editor of the online anthology/ "museum" of Oakland, *Deep Oakland*. Young and poet Juliana Spahr coedited the book *A Megaphone: Some Enactments, Some Numbers, and Some Essays about the Continued Usefulness of Crotchless-pants-and-a-machine-gun Feminism*, a collection of "enactments" investigating politics, feminism, and collaborative poetry practice that the pair performed between 2005 and 2007.

## SMALL PRESS

# Imagination and Collaboration Behind Krupskaya Books



### INTERVIEW BY MORGAN PARKER

San Francisco-based publishing collective Krupskaya Books, founded in 1998, boasts an impressive catalog of experimental texts by underrepresented voices. Its publishing model is one of collective responsibility and enthusiastic consensus among its passionate writer-editors. I interviewed its two newest editors, Stephanie Young and Brandon Brown, who both published books with the press before coming on as editors, about their editorial process, concerns and motivations, as well as its founding editor, Jocelyn Saidenberg.

**Boog City: Okay. Tell me about the name Krupskaya, taken from Lenin's wife. How were you founded and why/how did you come to this name?**

Jocelyn Saidenberg, publisher and founding editor: Rodrigo Toscano, Hung Q. Tu, and I, the first three editors with whom I had deep kinship and productive arguments, were searching around for a name. We were meeting those days in a bar on Market Street called the Orbit Cafe. We liked the idea of naming it after someone, that sense of generations, and yet who would that be. I am pretty certain it was Rodrigo, though it might have been Hung, who suggested Krupskaya, a historical figure whose work was prodigious and revolutionary, and yet forgotten, or nearly so. In addition to her historical significance, it was important to me that it was a woman and I liked that the word itself was awkward and not elegant sounding. All of that seemed to resonate with something in the air aesthetically in San Francisco in 1998.

**What's your philosophy and aesthetic and how do they interact? How do you define "experimental"?**

Brandon Brown and Stephanie Young: Coming in as new editors, one of the most remarkable things about the history of Krupskaya is how diverse an audience of writers and readers it has served. If there's a central commitment associated with the press, it's to publishing underrepresented voices. Krupskaya has consistently sought out and published works by women, writers of color, and queer writers, published a lot of first books, and given those whose work wasn't widely known in experimental writing circles an opportunity to reach a wider audience.

Uh oh, we just used "experimental" without defining it. Perhaps what we mean is that in 15 years, most of the books published by Krupskaya are "experimental" in the sense that their authors are asking a lot of questions about politics and art and rarely writing from a position that these questions have already been answered.

**What projects are you working on right now?**

Brown and Young: We are publishing Erika Staiti's *The Undying Present* and Marie Buck's *Portrait of Doom*, both scheduled to arrive in the world in early 2015.

**What are some of the past projects you're particularly proud of, and why?**

Brown and Young: We are both new editors, so it's hard to say exactly—as readers, so many of the press's projects have informed our own. We both published books with Krupskaya prior to coming in as editors, so we're proud to say that we are also part of the press's history. This is something we particularly love about Krupskaya that many of its writers have also been editors—its commitment to collectivity and bringing in new and various perspectives over the years.

**What do you think the responsibilities of a small press are in 2014?**

Brown and Young: It feels difficult to imagine the responsibility of something like a small press while, as we write this, so many cities in the U.S. burn with rage against the nightmare of our police state. And yet, here we are, a small press among many others, whose work we find important and see ours in conversation with. And with that comes some responsibility.



Running a small press is most like an ongoing act of care—the root meaning of "curate," after all—and we imagine that right now, as ever, the responsibility of a small press is to do something other than reproduce various forms of business as usual, cultural production included. For us this means carrying on Krupskaya's commitment to seeking out and publishing works by women, writers of color, queer writers. We think this is something basic that all small presses should be doing. As new editors we know we still have a lot to learn, and do, in this regard.

But we are also thinking about this question more widely as we proceed. What forms of

curating, of care are necessary now? Who are we responsible to? We are glad to be able to take care of such great works of art, to hope that they in turn in some way take care of the people who will encounter them.

**What's the collective process like? Is it a true collective? Are y'all friends? Do you fight?**

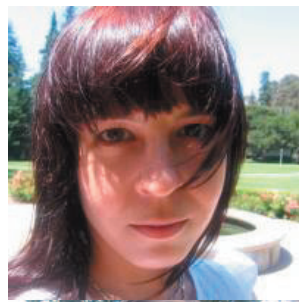
Brown and Young: Editing this press is a total pleasure! And we are all friends, so like anything pleasurable, we enjoy editing this press together. There is the pure pleasure of reading so much new work and discussing it with friends. (But also the pain that we're not able to publish everything we'd want to.) We often leave editorial meetings wishing the conversation didn't have to end. We could talk to each other for a long time. And we do.

In terms of process—Krupskaya has always been collectively edited, but the dynamics have changed over the years. There have been many years with four editors and sometimes just two. For this first round, Kevin [Killian], Stephanie, and Brandon read all the manuscripts that were submitted. We also wrote back to each person who submitted a manuscript with some (however inadequate) response to their work. This was enormously time-consuming but an important part of how Krupskaya has related to the press's community of writers and readers, and something we want to continue. After agreeing on a short list of very, very strong manuscripts, the final decision was of course difficult—but it didn't involve a fight.

**How does (or doesn't) the editorial and publishing process inform your own writing?**

Brown and Young: This is another open question for us, having just started really, and we are still learning a ton about what it means to be an editor from Jocelyn and Kevin. The experience of reading hundreds of manuscripts was intense and gave us a wider sense of what is being made right now, what people are thinking about. Working so closely with Marie Buck and Erika Staiti on these two extraordinary books has taught us both something about imagination, collaboration, and the process of shaping a manuscript. I think we're both curious about how this experience will influence and inform our writing going forward!

Stephanie Young



Brandon Brown

**'Krupskaya has consistently sought out and published works by women, writers of color, and queer writers, published a lot of first books, and given those whose work wasn't widely known in experimental writing circles an opportunity to reach a wider audience.'**

**—Brandon Brown and Stephanie Young**



# Kick-Ass Books Manic D Press at 30



## BY BRUCE COVEY

Boog City Small Press Editor Bruce Covey talks about poetry, publishing, and punk rock with Manic D Press Founding Editor and Publisher Jennifer Joseph.

**Boog City: You’re celebrating your 30th anniversary as a press! Congratulations! You were, in essence, one of the founders of the “small press revolution”—the migration of vibrant literary writing from large New York-based houses to smaller, independent presses. Did you anticipate or hope for this level of success (and longevity) when you started the press?**

Jennifer Joseph: Not at all. Manic D started as an “art project”; it was just something to do. In the early ‘80s, San Francisco was much more affordable and everyone was working on something: they were in a band, or writing a screenplay, or doing performance art or something. The first Manic D book was my own—*The Future Isn’t What It Used To Be*—and I discovered I really liked making books. In the early ‘90s, I got more serious about making this a viable way to make a living. I got to quit my day job in 1994 when Manic D signed a distribution deal with Publishers Group West. If I had known that the company would be around for this long, I would have given it a different name—one with a little more gravitas. In 1984, I was two years out of college and still had a sophomoric sense of humor. I appreciated presses with names like Permanent Press and Toothpaste Press. There’s a statistic that poets have a higher incidence of bipolar disorder than the general population, so I thought Manic D Press was a memorable name for a poetry press.



Jennifer Joseph

### What are some of the biggest differences between 1984 and 2014 publishing?

In 1984, computers were uncommon, so the first three Manic D books were typeset by a typesetter and laid out by hand on cardboard flats at the kitchen table. Books didn’t need barcodes in 1984 because there were no barcode scanners. Manic D’s first 100 ISBNs were free.

### ISBNs aren’t cheap these days!

ISBNs are not cheap. A few years ago, we got our next set of 100 and it was expensive! With the invention and common use of ebooks, we need to get another hundred.

**You were a guitarist in a band with Janet Weiss of Sleater-Kinney, weren’t you? I’ve always thought of Manic D Press as maintaining a kind of post-punk aesthetic (in the best possible way). Can you speak to some of the ways in which music and arts culture have influenced the press?**

Janet joined our band, The Furies, when our first drummer couldn’t tour—she had kids and needed to stay in San Francisco to get her welfare check. I bought Janet her first drum set from a pawnshop at Mission and Sixth. She had never been in a band but played guitar and took to the drums like a duck takes to water. Our band—all female, pre-Riot Grrl—used to weave a lot of poetry into our live shows and we wrote a bunch of songs about art, so the lines were blurred between everything.

After the band broke up, I was invited to start a weekly poetry reading at a local nightclub, The Paradise Lounge, where our band had often played. That turned into a major scene that happened every Sunday night from around 1988 or ‘89 until 2001, and a lot of really well known writers came out of that scene. In ‘93, Manic D co-sponsored The National Poetry Slam, which was held in San Francisco, and a few Manic D writers came from that event, including poets Jeffrey McDaniel and Matt Cook. During the summer of 1994, Manic D was invited to do a West Coast tour with the Lollapalooza Festival—which had its third stage dedicated to poetry—and we did six or eight shows. The band line-up that summer was phenomenal. It was awesome.

### Do you still play guitar? Do you still write?

I still have my guitars, but haven’t picked them up in a while. Maybe I’ll play music again sometime. I’ve been writing always, but not really pursuing publication or reading out. When one works full-time at publishing and, for 10-plus years, emceed a poetry reading every week, that’s plenty of publishing and public speaking (though my old pal Richard Loranger invited me and another old pal, Bruce Isaacson of Zeitgeist Press, to do a reading, so I do participate when invited).

### When I think of Manic D Press I pretty much just think of Jennifer Joseph—do you have help?

I’m still the only paid employee at Manic D—I’m a good publisher but not a very good capitalist—and the staff has always been a rotating crew of intelligent, creative interns.

### Tell me about Cassandra Dallett’s new book?

*Wet Reckless* is a great collection of poems. It came in through the basic Manic D submissions route; I had never heard of Cassandra before, but evidently she has quite the following in the Bay Area and beyond. *Wet Reckless* is a poetry memoir in a way: rough and tumble reality like Bukowski, but with a sense of place permeating throughout, like [Elizabeth] Bishop. More than a random collection of poems, it reads like a cohesive book and is worth going back to and reading again (and again).

**You’ve published Amber Tamblyn, Michelle Tea, Daphne Gottlieb, Justin Chin, Ellyn Maybe, Francesca Lia Block—writers who have balanced their lives as poets with work in other genres or in other artistic careers or spotlights. As a poetry publisher, are you particularly drawn to poets who are able to bridge cultural or aesthetic boundaries? (Although you’ve also published Adrienne Su, who is such a wonderful poet, and who, to my knowledge, only writes poems.)**

New books forthcoming in the spring from Adrienne Su (*Living Quarters*) and Myriam Gurba (*Painting Their Portraits in Winter*)! While I consciously make an effort to keep the Manic D list balanced—with regards to gender, ethnicity, identity preference, artistic discipline—at the end of the day, I’m just drawn to good writing.

Luckily, if there’s something I enjoy reading, it’s likely that other readers will enjoy it, too. It gives me the greatest pleasure to work with the Manic D authors to create a kick-ass book.

**Last question: As you can tell, I read mostly poetry, but you publish a lot of kick-ass fiction, non-fiction, and even coloring books! What ties everything together?**

Everything is tied together by an aesthetic and progressive viewpoint, which moves ideas that have been traditionally marginalized toward the center to make them more accessible to others. It can be summed up by: “Tell me a story; make it a good one I can lose myself in. Help me to understand what it means to be alive. Help me to feel things deeply and not be afraid.” Emily Dickinson wrote, “I dwell in Possibility”; Manic D has found a home there too.

## Links

<http://www.coconutpoetry.org>

<http://www.manicdpress.com>

## Bios

**Bruce Covey**’s sixth book of poems, *Change Machine*, was published by Noemi Press last 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.

**Jennifer Joseph**’s articles about publishing and marketing literature have appeared in *American Bookseller*, *The San Francisco Bay Guardian*, and *The Los Angeles Times*, among other publications. She has been a guest lecturer and panelist at The Rice University Publishing Program, The American Booksellers Association convention, California Institute for the Arts, New York City’s Poets House, The California Writers Club Conference, The National Association of College Stores Conference, The Associated Writing Programs Conference, Media Alliance, Mills College, and San Francisco State University, among other venues. She has served as a judge for The San Francisco Foundation’s Jackson Phelan Award for Literature, The San Francisco Bay Guardian’s Poetry and Fiction contests, and The Film Arts Foundation’s Screenwriting Award. She has also appeared on CSPAN’s BookTV in a panel discussion about West Coast publishing presented by The National Writers Union, and as a guest on Michael Krasny’s *Forum* on KQED radio.

## Links

<http://www.eternaldrag.bandcamp.com>

<http://galatearesurrection17.blogspot.com/2011/12/critic-writes-poems.html>

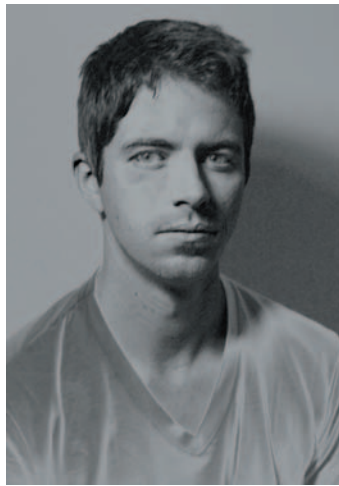
## Bios

**Logan Kroeber** plays drums for The Dodos and Anna Hillburg, and writes songs for Eternal Drag. He has lived in San Francisco for the last 12 years and grew up playing heavy metal and skateboarding in Santa Cruz county.

**Sunnylyn Thibodeaux** is the author of *As Water Sounds* and *Palm to Pine*, as well as the small books *88 Haiku for Lorca*, *Against What Light*, and *Room Service Calls*. She left New Orleans for San Francisco in 1999 to attend (the now defunct) New College of California. She still lives in \$F. Micah Ballard photo.

# MUSIC

## Something Resembling Poetry: A Conversation with Eternal Drag’s Logan Kroeber



BY SUNNYLYN THIBODEAUX

While San Francisco’s indie darlings The Dodos are gearing up for the release of their sixth album, *Individ*, in January, drummer Logan Kroeber has been bursting at the seams with a creativity all his own. Melodic and ethereal, Kroeber’s songs, now with guitar in hand, are full of rhythmic strumming intertwined with harmonies that get at one like a cross between She Hangs Brightly and Rise And Fall. The thick fluidity of these melodies is paired with Kroeber’s romantic and shadowy lyrics for the making of a new area darling no doubt. I had a chance to ask Kroeber some questions about this new venture before their last show at the Independent in SF.

**Boog City: How did Eternal Drag come to be? (as a name and an entity)**

Logan Kroeber: I used to share a practice space with this guy SQ, and he brought in a painting he found on the street of this guy with his hand to his mouth, puffing on a cigarette. My old guitar player and I were riffing on who this character was, and at some point he noticed this poor guy was trapped in an eternal drag with his cigarette. I loved the sound of it but didn’t think of it as a name until just before our first show. The band started around that same guitar player, Chad [LAST NAME], he really helped me think I could actually perform these songs and introduced me to most of the other people in the band too.

*I don’t know if it was Chad leaving that brought it on, but the tempos have been inching up off the couch recently. We used to pantomime shooting up heroin at practice to put our minds in the proper slowed down mode, and my drummer has been catching me lately not taking my virtual heroin.*

**You’ve been on the SF music scene for about a decade playing drums, how’s the shift for you to stand in front of the audience presenting these songs that you’ve written?**

It’s weird. I think I played 75 percent of our first show with my eyes closed because I was concentrating so hard. I’d love to be a bit looser like when I play drums, but I know my vocal accuracy suffers if I’m not staying on top of it, and singing well is my number one goal right now. Otherwise it’s been really fun to switch things up and playing guitar with another drummer has really made me appreciate drumming a lot more.

**I remember your eyes being closed—maybe a little vulnerability, like if-I-can’t-see you-you-can’t-see-me? or was it more for concentration?**

Well, I never close em on purpose as I’m not the type of guitarist who plays best with his eyes closed, so it probably is a subconscious reaction.

**I had the pleasure of seeing y’all live for your first show at The Hemlock Tavern back in March 2014. Since then your right hand man left town. How has this affected the sink-into-the-couch-and-vibe-out slow droning melodies that swept us last? Or has it at all?**

I don’t know if it was Chad leaving that brought it on, but the tempos have been inching up off the couch recently. We used to pantomime shooting up heroin at practice to put our minds in the proper slowed down mode, and my drummer has been catching me lately not

taking my virtual heroin. Besides that, I’ve brought in a new harmony singer and guitarist so there will be more interlocking parts on stage than before.

**I happen to know that you took a poetry class at (the now defunct) New College of California. Does poetry hold a place of influence on your song writing?**

That class showed me that there was a reservoir of something resembling poetry waiting deep in my mind, and all I had to do was let it spill out. Robert Duncan’s “Often I Am Permitted to Return to a Meadow” was a real eye opener. I access that same feeling writing songs now, but the flow of the words stops once I find the right melody, then I have this framework I must bow to. I wish I could will the words to keep flowing in a natural way with the music, but I think poetry will always have more power over me than I do over it.

**This may be a little bit of a chicken vs. egg question, but you say, “the flow of the words stops once I find the right melody.” As a musician I imagine finding a melody is a given, but do you start with language or with a melody? Could you let language flow without finding a melody? Have you ever tried to put an instrument to the rhythm of a poem?**

Melody usually comes first, maybe with a few slurred syllables that eventually form into words with repetition. That’s been the most common route for me, but recently a short phrase or something that seems like a good song title will float into my head and the challenge of writing a song around that initial idea has been really fun lately. When I write poetry the words do flow on their own but it’s more like magnets clustering and joining up into little shapes versus the more graceful flow of a good melody. I’m definitely not bridging those two approaches yet but I think I’m creeping towards some middle ground.

**There’s constant buzz about the artists, poets, musicians leaving San Francisco because of gentrification. We’re saying good-bye to many music venues too. Do you feel this as a threat, a new wave to ride, inspiration, or do you tune it out?**

There was a minute where I was letting it get me down, but when I looked at my life I saw that I was still in three rad bands, was inspired by the people around me and living in a beautiful city. I think by staying busy I do tune it out a bit, but I’d be lying if I said I didn’t draw some kind of inspiration from the situation. I’ve been thinking of S.F. as a benevolent host lately, that it wants the best for me and I need to look out for it too.

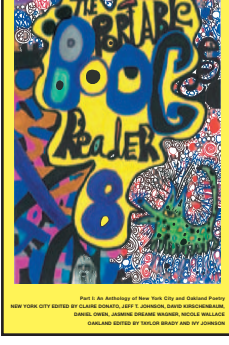
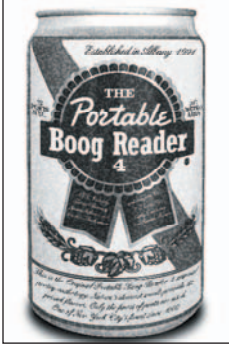
**What is upcoming for Eternal Drag that your fans can look forward to?**

Sadly we’re gonna be pretty inactive until the spring, but I’ve been thinking about recording a lot lately. I’m really gonna go nuts when we finally hit the studio. I have a long list of production ideas and an even longer list of songs and I’ve been practicing pedal steel guitar trying to come up with overdubs for songs. So hopefully I can make that happen next year and keep playing shows.

**What about a web presence or someplace we can listen?**

We only have a bandcamp page with two harsh demos and that’s it right now. I’ll be a better self-promoter when I actually have a record to promote.

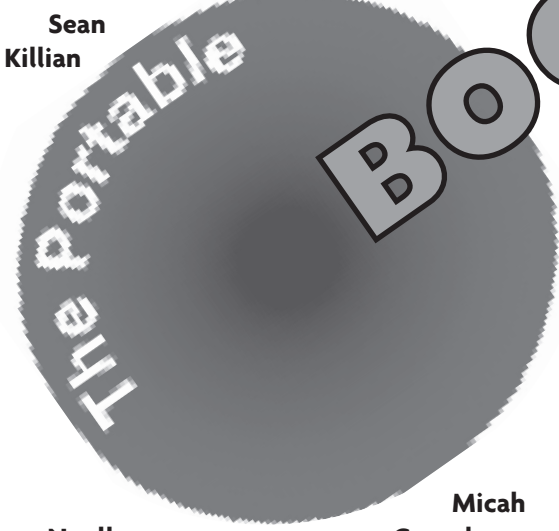




PBR1

Betsy Andrews  
Bruce Andrews  
Andrea Ascah Hall  
Anselm Berrigan  
Edmund Berrigan  
Tracy Blackmer  
Lee Ann Brown  
Regie Cabico  
David Cameron  
Donna Cartelli  
Neal Climenhaga  
Allison Cobb  
Todd Colby  
Jen Coleman  
John Coletti  
Brenda Coultas  
Jordan Davis  
Katie Degentesh  
Tom Devaney  
Marcella Durand  
Chris Edgar  
Joe Elliot  
Betsy Fagin  
Rob Fitterman  
Merry Fortune  
Ed Friedman  
Greg Fuchs  
Ethan Fugate  
Joanna Fuhrman  
Christopher  
Funkhouser  
Drew Gardner  
Alan Gilbert  
Nada Gordon  
Marcella Harb  
Mitch Highfill  
Bob Holman  
Laird Hunt  
Lisa Jarnot

Adeena Karasick  
Eliot Katz  
Sean  
Killian



Noelle  
Kocot  
Susan Landers  
Katy Lederer  
Rachel Levitsky  
Andrew Levy  
Richard Loranger  
Brendan Lorber  
Lisa Lubasch  
Kimberly Lyons  
Dan Machlin  
Pattie McCarthy  
Sharon Mesmer  
Eileen Myles  
Elinor Nauen  
Richard O'Russa  
Julie Patton  
Wanda Phipps  
Kristin Prevallet  
Alissa Quart  
Matthew Rohrer  
Kim Rosenfield  
Douglas  
Rothschild  
Eleni Sikelianos  
Jenny Smith  
Chris Stroffolino  
Kristin Stuart  
Gary Sullivan  
Edwin Torres  
Sasha Watson  
Karen Weiser  
James Wilk  
Rebecca Wolff  
John Wright

PBR1A

Philadelphia

Holly Bittner  
Kyle Conner  
CA Conrad  
Valerie Fox  
Seth Frechie  
Mark Gaertner  
Matt Hart  
Eric Keenaghan

Teresa Leo  
Janet Mason  
Gil Ott  
Ethel Rackin  
Don Riggs  
Kerry Sherin  
Frank Sherlock  
Heather Starr

PBR2

Bruce Andrews  
Ellen Baxt  
Jim Behrle  
Jen Benka  
Charles Bernstein  
Anselm Berrigan  
Charles Borkhuis  
Ana Bozicevic-Bowling  
Lee Ann Brown  
Allison Cobb  
Julia Cohen  
Todd Colby  
Brenda Coultas  
Alan Davies  
Mónica de la Torre  
LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs  
Thom Donovan  
Joe Elliot  
Rob Fitterman  
Corrine  
Fitzpatrick  
G.L. Ford  
Greg Fuchs  
Joanna Fuhrman  
Drew Gardner  
Eric Gelsinger  
Garth Graeper  
David

Micah  
Greenberg  
E. Tracy Grinnell  
Christine Hamm  
Robert Hershon  
Mitch Highfill  
Bob Holman  
Paolo Javier  
Paul Foster  
Johnson  
Eliot Katz  
Erica Kaufman  
Amy King  
Bill Kushner  
Rachel Levitsky  
Andrew Levy  
Brendan Lorber  
Kimberly Lyons  
Dan Machlin  
Jill Magi  
Gillian McCain  
Sharon Mesmer  
Carol Mirakove  
Anna Moschovakis  
Murat Nemet-Nejat  
Cate Peebles  
Tim Peterson  
Simon Pettet  
Wanda Phipps  
Nick Piombino  
Kristin Prevallet  
Arlo Quint  
Evelyn Reilly  
Kim Rosenfield  
Lauren Russell  
Kyle Schlesinger  
Nathaniel Siegel  
Joanna Sondheim  
Chris Stackhouse  
Stacy Szymaszek  
Edwin Torres  
Anne Waldman  
Shanxing Wang  
Lewis Warsh  
Karen Weiser  
Angela Veronica Wong  
Matvei

Yankelevich  
Lila Zemborain

PBR3

Ammiel Alcalay  
Betsy Andrews  
Ari Banias  
Jennifer Bartlett  
Martine Bellen  
Edmund Berrigan  
Kate Broad  
Julian Brolaski  
Donna Brook  
Sommer Browning  
Matthew Burgess  
David Cameron  
Mike Coffey  
Jen Coleman  
John Coletti  
Matt Cozart  
Elaine Equi  
Jessica Fiorini  
Jennifer Firestone  
Ed Friedman  
Ethan Fugate  
Rigoberto González  
Nada Gordon  
Stephanie Gray  
Shafer Hall  
Diana Hamilton  
Hayley Heaton  
Cathy Park Hong  
Vanessa Hope  
Dan Hoy  
Lauren Ireland  
Adeena  
Karasick

PBR4

New York City

Andrea Baker  
Macgregor Card  
Lydia Cortes  
Cynthia Cruz  
Pam Dick  
Mary Donnelly

Will Edmiston  
Laura Elrick  
Farrah Field  
Kristen Gallagher  
Sarah Gambito  
Aracelis Girmay  
John Godfrey  
Odi Gonzales  
Myronn Hardy  
Mark Horosky  
Brenda Iijima  
Ivy Johnson  
Boni Joi  
Hettie Jones  
Pierre Joris  
Steven Karl  
Vincent Katz  
Jennifer L. Knox  
Wayne  
Koestenbaum  
Estela Lamat  
Mark Lamoureux  
Ada Limon  
Sheila Maldonado  
Jesus Papoleto  
Melendez  
Susan Miller  
Stephen Motika  
Marc Nasdor  
Charles North  
Jeni Olin  
Cecily Parks  
Nicole

Basil  
King  
Martha King  
Noelle Kocot-Tomblin  
Dorothea Lasky  
Jeff Laughlin  
Amy Lawless  
Walter K. Lew  
Tan Lin  
Tao Lin  
Filip Marinovich  
Justin Marks  
Chris Martin  
Tracey McTague  
Stephen Paul Miller  
Feliz L. Molina  
Ryan Murphy  
Elinor Nauen  
Uche Nduka  
Urayoán Noel  
Akilah Oliver  
Geoffrey Olsen  
Jean-Paul Pecqueur  
Greg Purcell  
Elizabeth Reddin  
Jerome Sala  
Tom Savage  
David Sewell  
David Shapiro  
Kimberly Ann Southwick  
Eleni Stecopoulos  
Christina Strong  
Mathias Svalina  
Jeremy James Thompson  
Susie Timmons  
Rodrigo Toscano  
Nicole Wallace  
Damian Weber  
Max Winter  
Sara Wintz  
Erica Wright

PBR5

New York City

Kostas  
Anagnopoulos  
L.S. Asehoff  
Miriam Atkin  
Jillian Brall  
Franklin Bruno  
Lucas Chib  
Alex Cuff  
Amanda Deutch  
Stephanie Jo Elstro  
Shonni Enelow  
Ben Fama  
Nina Freeman  
Cliff Fyman  
Greg Gerke  
K Ginger

PBR6

New York City

Stephen Boyer  
Todd Craig  
R. Erica Doyle  
Laura Henriksen  
Paolo Javier  
Rebecca Keith  
Karen Lepri  
Justin Petropoulos  
Caitlin Scholl  
J. Hope Stein  
Jennifer Tamayo  
Lewis Warsh

Philadelphia

Andrea Applebee  
Amelia Bentley  
Susanna Fry  
JenMarie Macdonald  
Travis Macdonald  
Paul Siegell

PBR7

NEW YORK CITY

Michael Gottlieb  
Ted Greenwald  
Gina Inzunza  
Curtis Jensen  
Jamey Jones  
Jeffrey Jullich  
Ari Kalinowski  
Robert Kocik  
Denize Lauture  
E.J. McAdams  
Ace McNamara  
Joe Millar  
Kathleen Miller  
Thurston Moore  
Abraham Nowitz  
Ron Padgett  
Douglas Piccinnini  
Brett Price  
Lee Ranaldo  
Lola Rodriguez  
Bob Rosenthal  
Thaddeus Rutkowski  
Zohra Saed  
Tracy K. Smith  
Mary Austin  
Speaker  
Sampson

Starkweather  
Paige Taggart  
Anne Tardos  
Cat Tyc

Peyrafitte  
Mariana Ruiz  
Lytle Shaw  
Laura Sims  
Mark Statman  
Nicole Steinberg  
Yerra Sugarman  
Anne Waldman  
Jared White  
Dustin Williamson  
Jeffrey Cyphers  
Wright  
John Yau

D.C. Metro Area

Sandra Beasley  
Leslie Bumsted  
Theodora  
Danylevich  
Tina Darragh  
Buck Downs  
Lynne Dreyer  
Wade Fletcher  
Joe Hall  
Ken Jacobs  
Charles Jensen  
Doug Lang  
Reb Livingston  
Magus Magnus  
David McAleavey  
Mark McMorris  
Chris Nealon  
Mel Nichols  
Phyllis Rosenzweig  
Casey Smith  
Rod Smith  
Ward Tietz  
Ryan Walker  
Joan Wilcox  
Terence Winch

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NEW YORK CITY

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Caitlin Scholl  
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Jennifer Tamayo  
Lewis Warsh

Philadelphia

Andrea Applebee  
Amelia Bentley  
Susanna Fry  
JenMarie Macdonald  
Travis Macdonald  
Paul Siegell

PBR7

NEW YORK CITY

Rosebud Ben-Oni  
Leopoldine Core  
Steve Dalachinsky  
Nicholas DeBoer  
Ray DeJesús  
Francesca DeMusz  
Claire Donato  
Ian Dreiblatt  
Anna Gurton-Wachter  
April Naoko Heck  
Darrel Alejandro Holmes  
Jeff T. Johnson  
Joseph O. Legaspi  
Amy Matterer  
Yuko Otomo  
Morgan Parker  
Marissa Perel  
Toni Simon  
Quincy Troupe  
Ken L. Walker

Pittsburgh

Nikki  
Allen

Tameka  
Cage Conley  
Yona Harvey  
Skot M. Jones  
Karen Lillis  
Shawn Maddey  
Deena November  
Jeff Oaks  
Alicia Salvadeo  
Ed Steck

PBR8

Part I

New York City

Martin Beeler  
Mark Gurarie  
Jeremy Hoevenaar  
Lyric Hunter  
Becca Klaver  
Ron Kolm  
Dave Morse  
Ali Power  
Pete Simonelli  
Kiely Sweatt

OAKLAND

Madison Davis  
Joel Gregory  
Lauren Levin  
Cheena Marie Lo  
Zach Ozma  
Emji Spero  
Cosmo Spinosa  
Chris Stroffolino  
Wendy Trevino  
Zoe Tuck

PBR8

Part II

New York City

Meghan Maguire  
Dahn  
Maria Damon  
Ted Dodson  
Mel Elberg  
Ariel Goldberg  
Christine Shan Shan Hou  
Alex Morris  
Michael Newton  
Lisa Rogal  
Sarah Anne Wallen

San Francisco

Norma Cole  
Patrick Dunagan  
Christina Fisher  
Sarah Griff  
Carrie Hunter  
Jordan Karnes  
Jason Morris  
Nico Peck  
Aaron Shurin  
Sarah Fran Wisby