

The Portable

# BOOG READER 9

An Anthology of Cincinnati and New York City Poetry



NEW YORK CITY EDITED BY DAVID A. KIRSCHENBAUM, BECCA KLAVER,

RON KOLM, LISA ROGAL, AND PAIGE TAGGART

CINCINNATI EDITED BY YVETTE NEPPER

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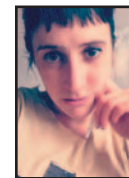
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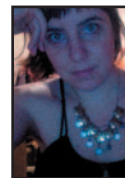
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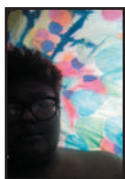
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*Here are a few words from our Cincinnati editor, Yvette Nepper, on her city and its poetry community. —DAK*

I had no idea what I was getting into when asked to help curate Cincinnati artists for *The Portable Boog Reader 9*. Outside of being a person who enjoys writing, reading, and forming community around art-stuff, I have zero credentials. In spite of this, Cincinnati's magic unicorn, Dana Ward recommended me for the job, so naturally, I accepted—having had no idea how many emails need be exchanged to launch this sort of thing. A lot.

Having said that, it's been a real honor to hype some of the weird and wonderful poetry coming out of the Queen City. Working with the editorial staff to connect some dots between Brooklyn and Cincinnati just makes me feel good, and I hope it makes you feel good too.

In the past few years I've developed a better understanding of what's possible in regards to community, friendship, and alliance, through art. The contributing Cincinnati writers featured here are people who have devoted substantial amounts of time to, not only writing, but also hanging out and forming a community with other artists. For example, Chelsea Tadeyeske runs a chill and cozy event space out of her commune/home under the title *Alt Milk House*. And contributing writer, Scott Holzman continues to curate family-vibe events at the venue upstairs from the barbershop, called *Chase Public*.

Cincinnati has a reputation for being obnoxiously conservative (see 1990's *Mapplethorpe Obscenity Trial*), which is why it's so important for us to develop safe spaces and counter-culture. Actually, I feel like it's out strength. So if you ever come to Cincinnati to pursue some art, make sure you stop by one of the many living rooms we have tucked around the city. And then ask someone to take you out to eat for your obligatory Cincinnati chili parlor experience. —Yvette Nepper

# About the Editors and Artist

## Cincinnati

Yvette Nepper lives and writes in the city she loves, Cincinnati. Her chapbook, *26 Poems for Grown Ups and Children*, was published by Perfect Lovers Press in 2012. Since then, she has manufactured and printed her own work, with particular interest in mediums that travel (dollar bills, postcards, etc). Collaborations with musical artists can be found at <http://yvetteneper.bandcamp.com/>. Kelly Crotty photo.



**Yvette Nepper**

## Artist

Dara Cerv is the author of a chapbook, *Bath Poems* (Sixth Finch). Recent poetry and collage appear or are forthcoming in *Jellyfish*, *Fruita Pulp*, *Nightblock*, *Queen Mob's Teahouse*, and *Columbia Journal*.



**Dara Cerv**

## New York City

**David A. Kirschenbaum**



David A. Kirschenbaum is the editor and publisher of *Boog City*, a New York City-based small press and community newspaper now in its 25th 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 (<http://www.myspace.com/gilmoreboysmusic>).

**Becca Klaver**



Becca Klaver (<http://beccaklaver.com/>) is the author of the poetry collections *LA Liminal* (Kore Press) and *Empire Wasted* (forthcoming from Bloof Books). She teaches at Rutgers University and lives in Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn.

Ron Kolm (<http://unbearables.com/>) is a founding member of the Unbearables. He is a contributing editor of *Sensitive Skin* magazine. He is the author of *The Plastic Factory*, *Divine Comedy*, *Suburban Ambush*, and, with Jim Feast, the novel *Neo Phobe*. A new collection of his short stories, *Duke & Jill*, has just been published by Unknown Press. Arthur Kaye photo/



**Ron Kolm**

Lisa Rogal (<https://twitter.com/Lrogal>) is the author of *Morning Ritual* (United Artists Books) and *The New Realities* (Third Floor Apartment Press). Rogal is a graduate of the M.F.A. program at Long Island University and teaches writing at CUNY. She co-curates the reading and performance series Heart-Star Salon in Brooklyn and lives in East Harlem.



**Lisa Rogal**

**Paige Taggart**



Paige Taggart is from Northern California and currently resides in Brooklyn. She is the author of two full-length collections, *Or Replica* (Brooklyn Arts Press) and *Want for Lion* (Trembling Pillow Press) and five chapbooks. She has her own jewelry line (<http://www.mactaggartjewelry.com/>) that specializes in blinging-out poets.

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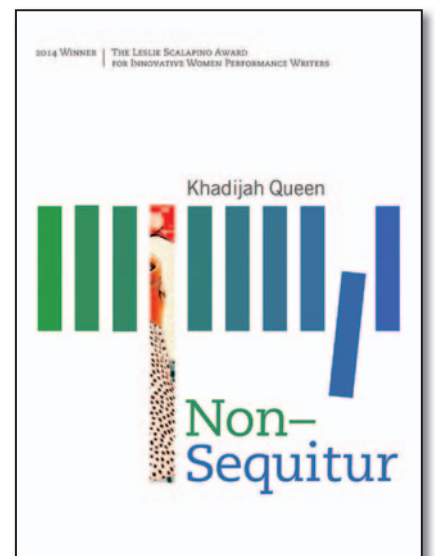
—Fiona Templeton, director, *The Relationship*

Judge, 2014 Leslie Scalapino Award for Innovative Women Performance Writers

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### ACTUALITIES

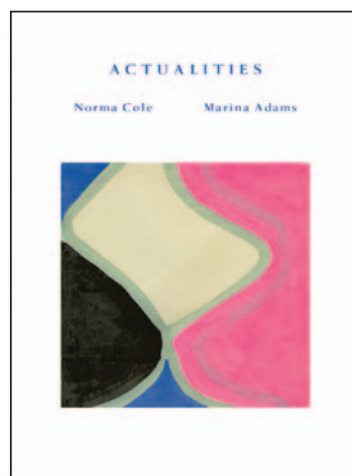
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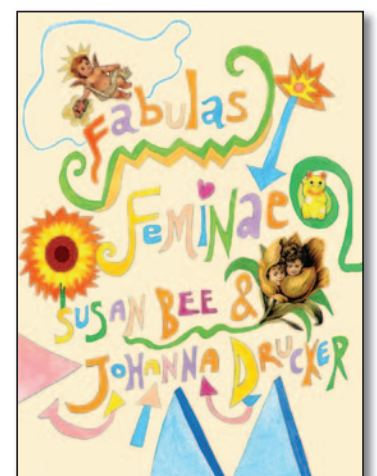
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— JENA OSMAN  
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# CINCINNATI

Dara Cerv  
Temporally Yours, 2015  
paper and paste  
7" x 8.25"

## cris cheek



### fuck-centered

fuck anything you want, except  
don't fuck with my authority

fuck the disease of government  
fuck the blood into the sheets

a fair price to pay to keep the desert  
from our streets and not on top of them

fuck me and my cutesy sense of propriety  
fuck a duck fuck the want out of everything

means just fuck right means it's the price  
of spreading fuck like a leaf

enough fuck right diseased government looking to govern  
from the top down then their clear desire  
the this the  
enough fuck with the diseases  
of government looking at government  
in use

and who the fuck am I to tell another who  
they cannot love  
cannot adore

### A scent of Marx's kiss

And that our politicians might concur  
holding the conservative zombies wanting  
characterizing labor through obsession  
that dare certainly making heartache  
return. Out on the lake a gas cargo  
reflecting on the states of liquidity  
rolling drums across crushed bodies  
in the basement of the dark to light club  
cheered the smell. I run, like a wire  
in the walls of the buildings of the  
bureaucrats. A kiss that characterizes  
liberal want isn't the whole of longing  
an apparent taste for the political martyr  
depicting the sweep of his hopeful extent.

cris cheek lives in northside, Cincinnati. He takes photos, makes videos, and likes to get live. He's always worked with sound and often in projected light. It's not so much about where you came from as where you are. He pays the rent working at Myaamia University.

## Sleaze

she wakes up slumped hard, exhausted  
against a mauve seashell wall.

the hotel plaster held together with hot  
glued bits of oceanic fragments.

A white murky film  
floods the cracks  
appearing frozen | hardened like neglected  
Crisco coagulated in the edge  
of a frying pan

her knees crunch  
as if that morning,  
he  
reassembled  
her bones

his fingers dangling  
like lobster claws-- prodding  
beauty between her teeth

she felt submissive  
when she yawned | her tonsils whispering sleaze

ugly is only generated  
from other people's mouths.

# Sidney Cherie Hilley



## Craigslist > Hey R, (White Couch) (W4m)

I'm typing this in a heap  
of busted halogen bulbs--  
/glass teeth in carpet wool/  
remnants of us &  
sixteen hours ago

the smell of dishwater and Prego  
wafting from the room  
where we attempted contact  
like a broken faucet  
dripping over the scalloped hands  
of lasagna wading in soap suds

I miss how you dribbled  
fruit-- like the ends of your mouth  
were locked open-- a flood gate  
for warm Kool-aid crawling sideways  
down your chin & swimming  
to my upholstery.

//those little pomegranate beads  
embedding in my white couch//

who knew (your) fluids would leave  
such an irreversible stain

you owe me  
13.95 for bleach

## Between a Cadillac and Circle K

The asphalt from the lotto ticket window  
to my thighs was thirty seven steps  
I sit with pit stains on my white dress  
I sit on the leather back seat, numb  
to the ticket holder walking  
the asphalt drive

Diamonds clustered in his dentals  
but he was no jeweler  
He flashed a tetris of light-eating prisms,  
platinum bars in enamel's gridlock--  
a grin of malice and metal mouth

If I kissed your hundred grand grill,  
as my saliva ebbs between your lips  
leaving a murky bathwater in your jowls  
Would you rust from my tongue?  
Would our tete-a-tete need lube  
before we brush our clothes from our skin?

The radio says through its teeth,  
96 degrees today, let the paper  
swim in ink.  
When she emerges from the pool,  
Towels dry,  
Look for the poem in her pores

< >

all womyn have indigestion

we take turns  
swallowing the moon

for us,  
it's just benadryl

## Omniverse (Detroit)

My closest trip around Saturn  
was encircling the rings in a leather  
bar's unisex bathroom sink--

Unisex, because I stumbled in  
//for an instant//  
sliding on foamy tile,  
fumbling to find a stall  
that wasn't an occupied bunker  
for fluorescent spandex thongs  
& star-spangled briefs-- Saturn's  
orbital rings, gyrating  
bumpy like wheels  
pushing over grainy, choked-up streets

Outside, I see a motor city native--  
His eyes are green, a little glossed.  
He peers under a black flat-bill  
embroidered with a golden, cursive, "D"  
that protrudes loud-- a yellow headlight  
guiding him down roads  
as dark as untouched space.

He drives his electric wheelchair  
into the ether of oncoming traffic,  
an instinct for a movement against  
redundancy: Everyone speeding  
until they are all out of gas.

//Speed. Empty. Refill. Speed. Empty. Refill//

In another instant, he is vapor  
and the traffic passes.

Meanwhile, the bathroom strangers clash  
in mutual sweat. Meeting for an instant,  
& speeding up their moments.

Sidney Cherie Hilley (<http://www.sidneycherie.com/>) is a poet, writer, and artist from Cincinnati. She released her self-published poetry chapbooks, *Blur* and *Ripe* in 2015. Recent art exhibitions include "Flamethrowers Predicting Rain" at Pear Gallery, "Artist Survival Guide" at Wave Pool Gallery, and "Likeness" at 1305 Gallery in Cincinnati.

## From "Invent a Dream Where You Appear as a Poet"

The dream without language. The dream without form. The dream without form puckers, the dreamer's caught breath caught against the sky's overwhelming tactile qualities. *This language is not symmetrical* Charles Gabel says without image. The lyre without meter. The wet song of the deer. The deer without image. The deer without image lie on the road in perfect symmetry. Charles Gabel formalizes the deer along route in search of the dreamer. Formal shapes of grammar overtake the radiant sky. Parallel organizing principles of thought pile through Charles Gabel's mouth. Direct statement. Image and action. The dream puckers with each attempt at action. The single vibration is caught from the lyre. Another vibration follows before Charles Gabel closes the first in his mouth. Each wave is felt individually and this becomes overwhelming to Charles Gabel and to the dreamer watching. Charles Gabel lies down in the road, near the dead things there.

\*

Another obsessed translator. Then another. Then another. What of these Mad Angels? The speaker falls from the word to gaze outwardly toward the reader, no longer a lover, but a colleague in textual self-analysis. Our speaker enters the register of critique, eschews intimacy typical of lyric poetry. Gods are portioned sparingly throughout the work. The Tiger Moth's wings rotate slowly in the author's apartment, later assigned to a dream. There they shimmer in the road, an angel's. Angel, from ecclesiastical Latin (angelus), retrofitted Greek (ἄγγελος). Messengers populate the work, retrofitted as lyric poetry.

(after Joseph Ceravolo)

\*

Rot begins. Organisms eat the dead poems in the road. Are you a suspension of my chorus? Mechanical possibility misreads us, each one a \_\_\_\_\_. Organisms begin the poems in the road, each one not a mammal exactly. Rot is a complex of organisms in process. The organs bloat inside the mammal; the bacteria exist as subtext to be amplified later in critical interrogation. Each poem is a tactile possibility misread as poetry. Each poem is a tender citation.

## Charles Gabel



I rummage the dead mammal's organs for the poem's architecture. I am not music in this geography; the lyre's lapsed signal beyond. The poet says to Charles Gabel *I am incapable of rot* and is incapable of rot, and I know that my lungs will never bloat with bacteria. Carrion organisms and poets will not arrive. Long lightning hooks against gravity competing with its storm and its storm. Apollo's still image still. Charles Gabel's lungs bloat with bacteria and the dreamer watches; a little god licks its way through the heavy air, a figment of speech and unknown as gravity.

\*

Step 1: scrape back this text only in oracular motions. Charles Gabel implores the dreamer to scrape back the plain. The dead things rot there, now able to serve as diagrams, not biology exactly. Infection blooms under the text. What poet finds us? The poet is a tangle of organs complicated by gravity. The poet is a lyre. The poet is a dead thing, overwhelmed by the vibrations of its music.

\*

Step 1: scrape back the text only in oracular motions. Other movements will frighten the angels revealed in the textflesh. The organs bloom in your throat, Charles, but this address finds little solace in gravity's nouns, your doubled mothwing apparatus. The blood is bright in the road. Millions of suns pool in the road. That's not sky. Earth ravaged by poetry. The uneasy arrangements of its chariots.

\*

Step 1: scrape back the text in oracular motions. This will delineate various tissues, pulling sublimity from the interest rates. Step 2: name your gods. This will dictate your influences until no relevant prayer can be found in the arrangement of text.

\*

Step 1: scrape back the text in oracular motions. The text is made up of various tissues. Their cellular composition is not yet determined, but certain human qualities are apparent, including political symptoms and aesthetic values. The skin flaps back to reveal its subliminal text. I am with you in petty flesh and in gravity, Charles. (I am with you)



## Excerpt from Lifestyle

a poem written for David Corns  
and dedicated to my favorite professor  
from the college I dropped out of, Dr. John D. Fairfield,  
and inspired by his favorite professor  
and author of the writing manual Plain Style,  
Dr. Christopher Lasch.

Have you ever been to France?  
I have. I loved it.  
I met a Romanian girl named Alina,  
and I loved her too.  
One night, we got very drunk  
in a communist bar  
somewhere near the bastille.  
Alina was a communist.  
So was her friend, Damien,  
the only visibly overweight french person  
I saw throughout my entire stay in Paris.  
Damien was large, had dreadlocks,  
abstained from dairy,  
planned on moving to Mexico to fight for the cause,  
assumed that I knew what he meant  
when he said, "the cause,"  
and for the duration of our experience  
did not, to my knowledge,  
spend more than a maximum  
of one hour away from the cloud of ignited and  
exhaled hash  
with which he was so closely associated  
in his particular social and political circles.

We were walking down the street in  
the financial district, La Defense,  
and he lit a spliff and said,  
"friends tell friends if they see a cop, oui?"  
I'm not sure why I remember that, but I do.

In the communist bar  
Alina and Damien and  
I'm sure their equally socialist friends  
are beloved regulars. Think Cheers set in Cuba.  
I'd like to think that Alina was Norm.  
The waitress, Sandra, was bringing us  
all of the unfinished pitchers  
of sangria from the rest of the tables.  
We stayed until they made us leave,  
missed the last train, and drank under a bridge  
until the sun came back.  
The next morning I threw up at The Louvre.

Alina called me cowboy boots,  
because I was wearing cowboy boots.  
I called her Alina,  
because that was her name.

I stayed with her and fifteen others  
in a art squat not far  
from the Voltaire Metro  
and a museum dedicated  
to the history of smoking.  
They fixed bikes-  
and had movie nights  
and at least in the moment  
>>>>

## Scott Holzman



it was working-  
in a certain sense of the word.

The last thing I remember Alina saying,  
when we saw a tall woman walk by:

"she looks like she has the legs of a frog."  
Roll up your magic carpet,  
don't fly away.

Flight, a word with many meanings.

First, the action or process of flying through  
the air.  
There is a crow in flight.

Second, a group of creatures or objects flying  
together.  
There is a flight of Canadian Geese over  
head, they look like a V.  
V is for victory, vaginal, or vulnerability.

Third, the action of fleeing or attempting to  
escape.  
The refugees are in flight from their homes,  
they are not flying in planes,  
they are walking thousands of miles with  
their lives on their backs.

Fourth, a series of stairs between two floors  
or levels.  
We made love on a flight of stairs  
between the fifth and sixth floor  
and because this is a poem  
those numbers have to mean something.

Fifth, an extravagant or farfetched idea or  
account.  
There is no hope for a better world,  
ignore the flights of fancy,  
sprouting from the well intentioned lips  
of young dreamers who will someday wake up.  
>>>>

Sixth, the tail end of a dart.  
The flight is broken on this one,  
don't throw it.  
You might miss and hurt someone,  
in fact, don't throw any of the darts.  
This is not a safe game  
to have at a bar.

Flight.  
(one finger) the act of flying  
(two fingers) together  
(three fingers) away from the hell thats behind us  
(four fingers) to get closer to heaven  
(five fingers) where nobody will doubt our  
dreams.  
(Six fingers) also, something about darts.  
I would have felt disingenuous  
if I didn't use each listed definition.

I wonder how a paratrooper feels  
on his or her first combat jump.

I think it's different than skydiving,  
because with skydiving  
the fear is that your parachute won't open and  
you will die a very frightening death  
when your body hits rural Ohio at terminal  
velocity  
and turns into something  
very much different than a body.

Paratroopers have that fear, sure,  
but they also have to be afraid  
of hitting the ground in one piece  
and then shooting someone.

My cousin Erik was a paratrooper.  
He won a medal  
for killing seven people with a grenade in Iraq.

Let us consider once more  
the aunt-uncle relationship.  
Erik's parents got divorced,  
and hoped the kids would understand  
that they never really loved each other.  
They hoped the kids would understand  
the restraining order.  
They hoped the kids would understand.

Erik joined the army,  
learned how to jump out of planes  
and how to kill people.  
He jumped out of planes  
and he killed people.  
Now he's training to be a cop.

I do not salute the american flag,  
I do not put my hand over  
where they tell me my heart is.  
I pledge allegiance to my community,  
not to wrapping paper for dead things.

Scott Holzman (b. 1990) (<http://www.chasepublic.org/>) is a writer and the director of chase public, a collaborative space for art and assembly in Cincinnati. He is a principal architect and organizer of the massively collaboratively written poem "Seven Hills and a Queen to Name Them" (2014).

## Purty Girl

Purty Girl adult world in Little Falls  
it's up to you to decide whether this is music or not  
whether this is demagogic, excellent, too arty, gorgeous,  
racist, true, or anything you want

It's a collection of patterns that are both entertaining to make  
and really well thought out.

A few dishwasher images and his  
release is in fact like two sides of a coin  
a ricotta-and-granola combo here  
available thru self-abuse or for possible trade

She'd turned his cock from flesh to stone.  
She hopes to sell it and earn enough  
to buy her grandfather a sweater.

Yup, c'est moi. Me so purty.

This is serious, shitty, work. Seriously. Someone has to do it.  
Today I also had two servings of something called Tonic Alchemy  
which makes my spleen behave in very antagonistic ways  
puss my suster

To nonsymbiotically fixate  
a stiff piece of paper cardy  
many more things & thoughts could have been transmitted  
by this tool of reaction.  
If it weren't so purty I'd call it skin flute  
If one wants to know the taste of the worm  
one has to transform the worm by eating it.  
I can choke like a budgie trying to eat  
a goat in these sorts of situations

DON'T JUDGE ME            my backside is numb.

"You gots a purty mouth, like many"

I stay objective and hate flattery.  
I have little time & even less money.

Chocolate cake is good and woolen  
sweaters are good. Therefore, I might  
take a little less chocolate cake in order to get  
more woolen sweaters.

Sex, chocolate cake, and rock & roll owe  
their allure to their effect on the nucleus accumbens  
a neural system all wired up to reward the brain  
for doing a filthy job  
It makes us all look like the grubby  
little mouthpieces we've become.  
Now is that a utopian vision, or just some fairytale  
lala feel-good Dionysian transversally-oriented disposition  
that lets you forget that you're too old for punk rock?

Yarbles—show some, if ya have any yarbles,  
ya eunuch jelly thou

Lower rewards equal lower desire  
to put in all the work required to  
become a passionate ménage à trois  
with soft caresses from virgins or whatever  
If you feel dirty afterwards  
without knowing why, it's gonzo porno.  
Turns out he needs vampires  
because sweaters alone don't draw the crowds

What's sad about all that is I ain't been married yet  
Crap, i forgot to mention the whole  
love angle—you know, beer goggle effect,  
marriages for chicks & dicks

## L.A. Howe



The bottom end of my high school class  
shipped out as reluctant soldiers, or, in rather  
surprising numbers, turned into strippers  
Look how many people believe the war  
with the zombies was a mistake, even hawks.  
The parrots left the views of the enemy—  
you can't shoot the financial meltdown in the  
head

That's the spirit! There isn't a problem that a  
focused  
lynch mob can't solve.  
Yup another case of passengers going schlussel  
Well, no rabid nut job had better come after me

The zombies, in a fey homage to George Romero,  
stand around like a bunch of actors  
under stormy skies, intoning the horrors  
of gay marriage in a robotic monotone.  
They all go home and write blogs instead of having sex.

No one wants a zombination— the shuffling  
and scabby living-impaired, they are not really  
in touch with their feelings.  
The shark thing has lots of good angles.  
If I'm in a coma hooked into machines  
the plug IS NOT TO BE PULLED even if my brain  
is shrunk to a walnut.  
Paracelsus affirms that potable  
gold is a tonic for the heart so the controls  
really start to jell into something far  
more immersive than ever before.

I am told, though, that I would still  
be able to strip and read Nietzsche  
after becoming a zombie.  
Gonna be a long-ass however long  
this is going to take to resolve.  
I need to lay down and wait for the little  
birdies flying around my head to stop.

*From "Voices of the Zombie Apocalypse."*

From *Notebook of dreams* (2009)

## On Writing

Mía,

today I made a furrow  
down the center of the page  
to leave a groove  
which makes the accent  
that opens you:

Smell of honey, open scar.

To be here, Mía  
is to contemplate  
how you come out my veins,  
endlessly  
through this line, flower, and verse  
in which I name you.

Apparition

*Don't think that I'm wooing you.  
Angel, and even if I tried to, you wouldn't come. For my call  
never comes close to you*

Rilke, *Duino Elegies*

I  
You refuse to destroy me. Your flesh  
acquires—in front of me—a heat  
less mortal. My heart  
attests to its twofold fear  
of looking at you and of not looking at you. Fear  
of mortal eyes.

I loosen my voice  
and am grateful from your dress:  
that you don't shine the light of your terrible skin  
on all my defects,  
that you're not leading me to a death from light.

II  
Become your presence, come  
to syllables of flesh and lamentations  
in order to suggest your feet  
when I call your name  
                  daring  
imagined before  
you were aware  
                  —more beautiful than the angel  
and as terrible—  
that you are going to wilt.

III  
Perhaps you are confused, perhaps  
eternal, the sound of your feet  
has made the evenings silent  
and your womb's hiding  
brought the night.

In any case, angel of flesh  
light of flesh, skin of flesh  
I can't resist  
your nakedness which is the beginning  
and end of everything: eternity is too much.

Your presence, if mortal, is a flame  
that consumes everything: naked you are lethal,

and you aren't listening to me.

IV  
I am not calling you, clear flame  
because I don't sing in the tones needed to reach your ears  
and because my words—the best of them—  
burn to ash upon brushing against you  
                  and although I know  
because it is true  
because you are so far away  
because our two natures  
are so cruel  
that this poem will never reach you  
I throw it towards your skin,

I give it to the fire.

## Manuel Iris



*Angel, slim and agile, slipped  
from birth to the dream that waits for him*

Rubén Bonifaz Nuño

I  
But how beautiful  
and how improbable is the dream  
in which you appear, Angel  
without wings.

But also  
how dream-like and how terrible  
that you can read to yourself  
while you are being born.

II  
How true and how terrible is the word  
the blank page  
the occasion  
on which you come to pose for the good of your own light  
for your skin  
for the voice  
in this poem  
                  that you are not listening to.

III  
How lonely is your silence, Angel.  
Your skin always passing  
from one voice to another, from one word  
to the flesh  
that my dream gives to you.

In her lap, the *Notebook of Dreams* lay like a cat. The wind  
typical of this season was rustling the leaves and rippling the  
lake, but it seemed to respect the book, whose pages didn't  
turn.

Suddenly, she stopped reading and said: *We're the dreamed  
ones. Look, note how the wind right now, through a whim of  
Mía's, has decided not to turn the pages in which we appear  
so that a reader, dreamt also by her, can know us and justify  
everything. It is because of this unlikely encounter that this  
book can't finish writing itself. Even your frustrated intention  
of singing the Angel, its absolute perfection, is nothing more  
than a whim of hers. Now I get it. It's very clear that this isn't  
a park but rather the end of a paragraph, a collection of words  
in an unfinished dream.*

*All poems were translated from Spanish by Matt MacBride*

Manuel Iris (<http://bufondedios.blogspot.com/>). (Mexico, 1983). Author of 4 books of poetry. Holds a Ph.D. in romance languages from the University of Cincinnati, the city in which he lives with his wife Claudia and their dog Coco.

## Some Pieces from Breakup Apartment

1.

I cannot see the future of breakup apartment: it doesn't have one. A rotten smell emanates from all of its rotten surfaces, from deep within the grain of its rotting 1895 wood like the smell of dying grandparents. I walk around the block and smell its dead rot in my hair and gag.

2.

I have a terrible crush on my slumlord. Before I chose breakup apartment, I followed him in my car while he rode a skateboard down a long winding hill through falling-down neighborhoods to falling-apart apartments. He was probably 50. Of course I fell a little in love with him. He was just my type: terrifying and/or magical, I wasn't sure, his character parallel to the character of the city where I live.

3.

The first apartment he showed me was on the third floor of an old factory building with once-white shag carpet now the color of dirt. The view of the city I hated filled the living room with a false and intense beauty. Standing on the strange gray linoleum in the living room which was also the kitchen, looking at several buckets strategically placed to catch leaking water, I was suddenly the kind of person who could tell anything to anyone. "This is awful, but far too amazing to be breakup apartment. I do not want to move up in the world. I want to sink heavily downward like Virginia Woolf into a lake," I said to my slumlord. He said he had something in mind.

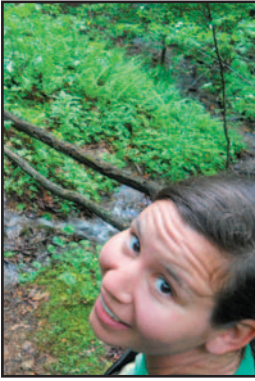
4.

On the phone I fretted to my ex- about the third floor apartment. I fretted about the roof caving and the ceiling falling down, not onto me (I didn't care), but onto my computer, smashing all the bad writing inside it. I fretted about getting out of my car on that block late at night. I fretted about feeling claustrophobic and agoraphobic simultaneously, having panic attacks in a windowless, casket-y bedroom. I fretted about falling down the pitch black stairway (you could see nothing even in daylight) to my death. I fretted about eternal insomnia, then about the factory building being crashed into by a plane, being trapped inside with my cats while it burned. My ex-said: It's a third floor apartment, not the Twin fucking Towers. I want to go on trips and sleep in tents and raise cats with you forever, I said. He didn't respond.

5.

Just after my breakup but before I met my slumlord, I repeatedly had a sex fantasy that took place in a bougie, enormous loft apartment. At the time, I was spending a lot of time fretting about how breakup apartment needed to be beautiful so I could feel less destitute and less hopeless overall. My sex fantasy could only take place in an endless, new-smelling loft apartment where I felt like a businesswoman erupting with vapid power, fucking a person with none. I put myself on a waiting list for a fancy high rise apartment building, then imagined my sex fantasy actually happening. I called back a few minutes later to remove myself from the list.

## Megan Martin



6.

I signed a lease for a crumbling house in a strange building with a chalkboard where my slumlord had written a gigantic quote, something along the lines of property being good for those who own it and terrible for those who don't. Was this a bad omen, or a sign that my slumlord secretly possessed a social conscience? While I read the lease, my slumlord said all of the wrong things. *8 years is a long time. That's almost as long as I've been married. What did you lose in the process?* he wanted to know. I think he meant stuff, or money. I said: A 14-year-old cat and my sanity? He said: Not much of a loss, really, and my crush swelled throughout my body. He presented me with a flier about lead paint (later I would have a panic attack about being poisoned by lead paint, my cats being poisoned by lead paint. Yet the possibility of being poisoned in breakup apartment felt right.) There was a clause in the lease about how he could kill any pet he wanted without justification. I signed, and said to my slumlord: I appreciate you, like he was someone very special to me.

7.

I texted my friend S. to wish him a happy birthday in the hopes that he'd try to find a way to fuck me, although he lived at the other end of the country. He had money, and almost immediately offered to fly me to his west coast city, move me into his house, provide me with coke to blow with him, and weep in unison with me about lost love. Later, in a hotel room near my city, he'd invite me to travel all of South America, and a few minutes after that, to marry him. I considered the insanity of this, but watched the little iPhone dots and felt so warmly toward them: someone was talking to me, responding to what I'd just said.

8.

When I finally move into breakup apartment I sleep on a mattress on the floor like a 21-year-old who can't afford a proper bed, when really I am a 38-year-old who cannot afford a proper bed. On my bedroom walls are paw prints from the raccoons who lived here before me. I eat meal after meal of nachos, burn incense constantly to eclipse the smell, then grow nauseated by the smell of incense. My bathtub won't drain, nor will my bathroom sink; before each shower I bucket cold leftover water and lug it to my kitchen. The tub fills so quickly that there is no opportunity for a proper shower during which I shave, or after which I feel clean, but it occurs to me that I will never feel clean at breakup apartment. Sometimes I fret about a man with an ax axing through the boarded up window in my kitchen, but mostly sit in the wreck and dream about bougie things: a perfect lawn and seafood, top shelf liquor on an airplane.

9.

I unpack and organize a room. During the organizing I feel accomplished and happy, but once the room is no longer awry with boxes I feel completely bereft. I unpack more and more slowly but eventually there is order; eventually my friend C. comes over and we write at my kitchen table and later he arranges a manuscript on my living room rug. Eventually I remember how to cook food for another person. I buy new sheets and a new duvet cover and my cats nest around me, urging me to sleep.

Megan Martin (<http://www.moonsickmagazine.com/two-stories-by-megan-martin.html>) is the author of *Nevers* (Caketrain Journal & Press). She co-curates the Important People reading series which happens on occasion in Cincinnati.

## mark s mendoza



("Say you've got a right  
to be here.")

Say you've got a right to be here.  
Coming up for air  
from the hollowed prayer

Taking to the lazy lizards as I write.  
Freedom is access to  
two competitive grants

Nature abhors a leash.  
Capitalize not every other  
but the last for force

Swig-fizz of shit beer  
brightened by insect chants  
by my bite-swollen ear

Drab cardinal whistles  
to mockingbird it thinks  
is a mockingbird

Cricket walks  
up the porch post  
to get to the tree

The cat in the Kabyle.  
The lighter side of... Centcom.  
The Nono simply in your head

### Charged Discharged

Who wears the way she feels  
helpless over  
the blackened eyeballs in her feta salad

Sarah don't cry  
it's your mother's dish  
only better, thrown over with a pinch

Doctors have words for  
bereavement  
but she is not following

Bare forelimbs lunge over  
red crayon circles  
mindful to dot the decay

To see half-formed scramble  
& brisk cartoons  
bring blessings to a standstill

The silence breaks unevenly  
as I button my sleeves  
"It's a house that's the sun"

### The Sound of a Thousand Glass Phones

We were due for a win as you dossed in the darkroom  
Thinking nothing of wastepaper towers, busy lines  
Persuaded you should one day see a childhood derrick topple  
Despite rising chest pains. The cathedral inflames

From a chaste plane, dim-tinted meadow plots.  
After last night's revelry, fingers point in three directions.  
Insects erect dykes and dams. Speed faith's worst enemy  
Faith speed's dangerous, sexy friend.

A casual impressiveness swells at dusk, as Sunday steps out  
Blameless, nudging the butt of a fallen something, maybe  
Affected despair, misplaced here as audacity I confound  
For a poised doppelgänger wrapped in pliant wire.

Russets and sapphire rule the spectrum.  
Further expressions are burgled by hearsay.  
Which goes to show anything one thinks  
Is almost always one thing thought

An intimate dispatch is plotted. Dwindling epicures  
Disturb entire ant colonies locked in to the debris.  
Air staid, agonized, until swallowed like honeyed capsules  
Pulled from a gutter of inductions

Dazed and rubbery necks request ox eyes, smiling kindly  
Over a few snappy questions; bleary earth and steep  
Rooftops puffing snow in their rifts. You, I  
Who fell against a day swayed with brass.

### Pitiful Inquiry

We left the racetrack without finding the racetrack.  
Only three senses of direction were ours.  
An unlit sign reminded us  
what it is to have a hometown.

It started to rain, it stopped being wet.

I had all my favourite movies on videotape  
except Antoine et Colette, which Emilie promised  
to present at the next special occasion.

Separated so many  
years, you no longer check the mail.

## Groundskeeper (I)

mind just a little dude minor aims today  
still mourning world-as-oyster duty-free  
where the shower was made a thermal pouch

of quarantined space-time temporarily immune  
to what's now perceived as deep union's  
cruder infringements:

that water its heat pleasures here linked  
to their likely depletion elsewhere  
in a kind of closed system call it life

grim enough but more in focus in play  
fore middle back three views same time  
line add up to sum total over binary slip

and true to what occurs too breaches  
swift turns pull composition inward  
as long-shots unfold over larger frames

that once felt to be as basic and penetrating  
as the air at least get suffered or taken up  
as fact within which to more skillfully dissolve

amidst abandoned bitumen on thousand acre tailings lakes say  
where artificial birds of prey simulate calls to dissuade waterfowl  
lest they land slick feathers drown in space-visible waste pits

"on a day with a bit of wind dust plumes billowing off the wheels  
and the loads of the dump trucks coalesce into a single enormous  
cloud that obscures large parts of the mine and spills over its lip"

two point five million plus public thoughts to consider I'm surprised  
when my prezzy-signed personalized sound-bite arrives on white house letterhead  
which now completes the formal loop thanks we'll keep you posted

## Groundskeeper (III)

all day morning pivots all day eve  
for that belief which constitutes selfhood to be experienced as pain  
and oranges flaring up like some wit's end supplication

a fraying network of silt gutters tattered run-offs link and divide mutely  
two weeks worth craving a sound-oriented shorthand  
and every second like this each arbitrary unit of measure

leaving scuffs and tracers in the atmospheric clean cube  
wolf to the lungs chasing sheep to the already fleeced air  
for the charge of sentience but I just don't buy it

and just think you wouldn't've seen it if not for this  
endless threads that read as cuts against community under guise of being it  
is that loneliness or some higher form of intimacy

tapped with no designs for payback the blind thrust of acceleration loosed  
while the love I'd anteed up for and left  
can move it: antediluvian bloodline along which faux-craters

like gravity-tricked cotton crane limbs toward the street  
whereto can take no luggage wherefrom no souvenirs back  
blows heavy fair though better here still we're ugly but we have the music

two selves switched out in time and what's felt  
stuck rogue and defiant from some previous screen damage  
one sec next just wants to get pristine accentuated vistas that alter briefly

seed and root primed toward the actual  
all labyrinthine and prehensilely disposed  
it's a liquidated future a spade obliterates

lines drawn in quicksand why pick a side and yet the feeling's palpable  
between one's back and the wall bills due and the default  
amidst abandoned bitumen on thousand acre tailings lakes say

Brett Price (<https://goo.gl/gy9gPL>) is a poet and editor. He's been a curator for the Friday Late Night Series at The Poetry Project at St. Mark's Church in New York City and the general manager for Ugly Duckling Presse, for which he now serves on the advisory board. Caitlin Wheeler photo.

## Brett Price



## Groundskeeper (IV)

novelty scanners lapse for a blink two clicks tops  
and potable water springs from the used  
minutia tapped new clause in the perma-thirst

it seems as contact deepens faith-imperatives  
shift in tone while case remains spade's  
a spade obliterates the hoped and the supposed

waves of sensation coppers oxidizing green  
real McCoys ushering the hearsay-skaters  
from thresholds stuck vestibular into savage time

pristine accentuated vistas that alter briefly  
what just appeared law before the self's fluxual  
heat swells up again in fata-morganic distortion

and so on and that becomes the mind  
all labyrinthine and prehensilely disposed  
gridlocked with a zillion ways to say so

each reinforcing the very thing  
within or amidst the inherently thingless  
I.D. as mediation divider obstruction to view

but looked through Fall appears  
sharp light stages long shadows where  
all day morning pivots all day eve

then sky's easy golds resort to lobbing floral pinks  
and oranges flaring up like some wit's end supplication  
the advancing ink remains indifferent to

and how's a body any different even the heartbeat  
proceeds discrete from volitional act moon's orbit and sleep-  
breathing facts of primary force sustained unaided

i slept until noon again

wow i look like a slut when i force myself  
to sit up straight  
my tits sticking out even further

google search: why...

not both  
is gas so cheap  
won't my cat eat  
am i always so tired

google search: do people...

change  
live in antarctica  
still use myspace  
get morning sickness when not pregnant

last night i dreamt i walked inside myself  
to turn everything off

i accidentally said out loud once

and everyone rolled their eyes  
like i spoiled the ending

if you bend it backwards nothing really happens

my teenage diary proves  
i was almost positive

once i saw myself in a woman  
who leapt and crushed a luxury  
limousine

and applied eyeliner to the corners  
of my eyes to make them  
seem wider

i've taught myself to turn off  
all faucets and electronics  
before walking away from them

we all must lay horribly awake  
thinking whatever left us here alone  
made a mistake

## Chelsea Tadeyeske



i can't believe i cried  
when Dawson's Creek ended

in tarot the hanged man in reverse  
means your goals and dreams  
will be put on hold

they'll just hang there all dried up  
like your childhood wallpaper  
smelling like lilacs on shit

i can't stop seeing the buoyancy  
of my baby self's hair  
as a bald man tells me  
i am more likely to be raped  
by someone i know

and something comes charging me  
like a dog with big white teeth  
then leaves just as quickly

it bothers me sometimes that i'll never know  
how to play the piano  
that i'm still comforted by the human voice

the impossible is pearlescent

a dress fell from the sky  
and i wore it  
an attic of vulnerability  
zipped up like a gift

i'd kindly not like the burden  
of believing in things  
like the smallest bones in my hands  
and inner ear and a spine that holds  
it all together

i'm just consequential  
to the cake heart

my idea of enlightenment is spitting up  
into a napkin and wincing at advice  
from my entrails

i'm really good at waiting in the car

all the cocaine we're snorting  
is making us particularly anxious  
about the skin beneath the skin  
already liver spotted and sagging

i like to imagine  
what would happen  
if instead of each other's faces  
we saw what we were thinking

for instance right now  
you would see me getting wet  
on a kidnap fantasy in which  
you're hard and i'm screaming  
and we both don't hear  
the mother in me

if you don't like drowning  
try turning into water

i want to say something about how you make me feel  
how my blood dries and pools at the same time  
then i want a cigarette because i can't get back at you  
in any real way

when i wake up and you're not the first thing i have to do  
i use my hands to make the shape of your head on my pillow

the last time we had sex  
i was really close  
to throwing up  
your percussed hips make me pity you

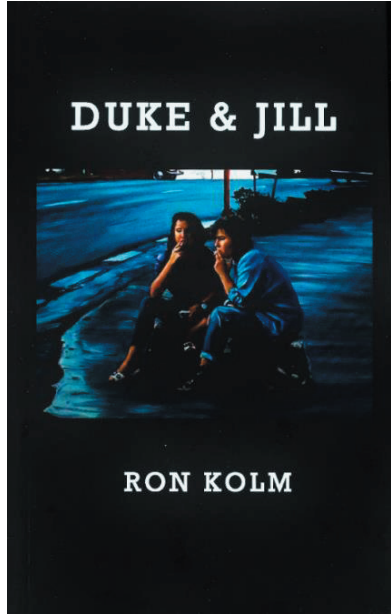
the first time someone asked me for a blowjob  
there was this pressure that wouldn't go away  
until i finally submitted

he sat next to me in math class  
always had nice things to say about my shoes  
he felt sorry

the phrase 'misshapen milk' repeats

i miss the way sleep softens you  
how it sours your breath  
building a miniature church out of your eyelids

“Ron Kolm's *Duke & Jill* stories are classic illustrations of appealingly casual criminal ingenuity at work in a society where everybody has too much of nothing, either materially or spiritually. They remind me of Denis Johnson's doom-flecked narratives as well as my favorite Buster Keaton movies. Even if the time and place of their setting is gone with the wind, their anarchic spirit is still a breath of fresh air.”--Gary Indiana, author of *I Can Give You Anything But Love* and *Do Everything in the Dark*.

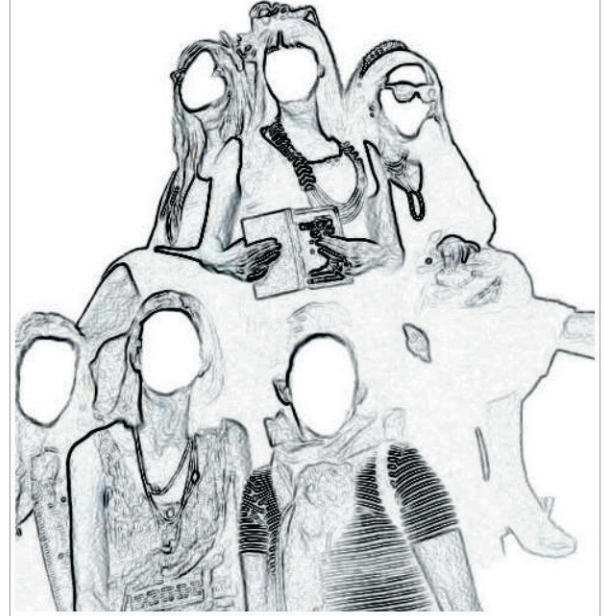


Unknown Press is pleased to announce the publication of *Duke & Jill*, a collection of short stories by Ron Kolm. The book is available at the Strand Bookstore, St. Mark's Bookshop, Three Lives & Company, McNally Jackson, Posman Books, Spoonbill & Sugartown, Powell's Books and many other fine bookstores. It's also available on Amazon, both as a paperback and as a Kindle edition.

“The old New York of the 1980s comes alive in this series of plaintive tales featuring the anti-heroic middle-aged survivalists, Duke and Jill. Ron Kolm's writing is delicate, empathetic, deadpan, and places the reader in the center of the action, where nothing and everything is happening at the same time. His point of view is never voyeuristic, but more like a comrade, living out his life alongside his characters. His stories never turn out the way you imagine, and then they do.” --Lewis Warsh, author of *One Foot Out the Door: The Collected Stories of Lewis Warsh*.

“ T - M - I ”

## GIRL TALK TRIPTYCH



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**Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that.  
Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.**

—Martin Luther King, Jr.

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# NEW YORK CITY

Dara Cerv  
When You Cannot Find Me It Won't Be for Why You Think You Cannot Find Me, 2015  
paper and paste  
7.5"x10.25"

## Unconditional

And my mouth, and my teeth and my urge to swaddle you.  
 Day. Night. Day. Night.  
 Stammer on. There was no fucking there.  
 Inside her there was no moisture. Just open arms.  
 No Honey. His cuffs. His wrists.  
 Day, and night, and day, and on, and on, and on  
 Like a never[-]ending slice of pink bread, or honeycomb  
 Because it was hot and it got hotter  
 His chest melting. His tummy melting.  
 I was struck by this decay; this deep pumping into  
 My spine with each push I lacked  
 The confidence to rub him away so  
 I loved him away instead.  
 Opium around my hips,  
 Sweating me out of your heart  
 And stripping me out of your liver  
 Back to myself.  
 A hiccup. A séance.  
 Blue sky.  
 You can't make babies for anyone else but yourself.  
 You and I can't dance blue or any other color but each other.  
 There is something about him, standing there, dressing himself;  
 Something tired and obsolete, and handsome.  
 I have spoken to myself and  
 I have made an outrageous claim.  
 There is nothing, but black in this castle.  
 Black nightmare and black cave.  
 But we are always withdrawing back into the comfort of getting lost.  
 She is suddenly within him and  
 Layered like molten caramel to his teeth.  
 She is suddenly a black huddled sphinx,  
 Creeping and crossing again and again into his smile.  
 Pink muses, throwing pink muses  
 Or some somewhat presence like that.  
 I can't help smelling you, isn't that honest?  
 These roses beneath me crack to be worn by you triumphantly  
 Thorns of glass.  
 I believe one day you'll find me in a desolate mine  
 Shape shifting my way back into you.  
 And the black coal will kill me  
 And the bats will eat my guts  
 But don't worry about the future  
 We'll get there one way or another.

## Cornelia Barber



## Don't be nice to your rapist

You're such a dorky celestial mess.  
 I'd like to give men something else to jack off to.  
 I'd like to write, emancipatory, unapologetic  
 Feminine poetry for men. For little boys.  
 How do I get rid of this grime?  
 Real, live, naked, horny girl!  
 We know what you want before you do.  
 Feeling bloody is a normal response to it.  
 We're pornographers of your inner light  
 Goddess, and of your biggest fears.  
 We're pleasure seekers who dwell in  
 The deep depths of boy and girl.  
 I am not shaking like a rabbit hole,  
 Or like your ex-boy-friend's missed call.  
 And I promise I won't be nice to you if you  
 Promise you won't be nice to your rapist.

## I Like When You Act Like a Man

I like when you act like a man  
 And you shrug into your hole of syncopated  
 Masculinities drowning and drowning the  
 Flowers.

I like your hyper elastic way of bending the rules  
 You make for me, for yourself, and for pretending that you are  
 A little kitten or that you are needless, like god.

I want you to become more like a man  
 As you're pumping your cum into me  
 As you're watching your child grow up alone.

I can't tell you the truth about my mouth  
 But I like you and your flowers  
 And I like when you act like a man.

## Heaven

In heaven there will be no love just pink blood  
 And it will eat you and me and all of us  
 And no one will shame me, or you  
 And we can have sex again without crying.

Cornelia Barber (<http://queenmobs.com/2015/07/poems-cornelia-barber/>) loves and admires her friends and family. She lives and writes in Crown Heights, Brooklyn.

## Another domestic dispute

Remember when you peed on my haircut  
not actually on but in the toilet while I was cutting  
and a woman needs her space

Remember how you watched me ovulate  
Now tell me the truth, what did you think?  
I mean did you like it, or uh-oh?

I don't think my body knows how to love anymore  
there is an itching and a general numb  
I no longer think with my body

Imagine slivering an onion such a small sliver  
and slipping it under your eyelid  
What would you prefer, or no body?

I can't undo it because it's been done  
I heard about Ben Franklin's dildos  
a wild collection that drives me white

It's not up to me to turn the movie on  
I'm busy with my fingers and my hair  
There is urine on the seat

This thing is designed hygienic  
I was taught about hygiene  
not hand sanitizer, but the real feminine stuff

Hardly around anymore to quiet the feelings  
There are multiple yous to whom I now speak  
I purchased a large book and scan its selection of fonts

Better to be legitimately gross than just this little bit  
The hairs on my head turn gray like quarters to  
spend on objects or food or services  
By gross I mean large

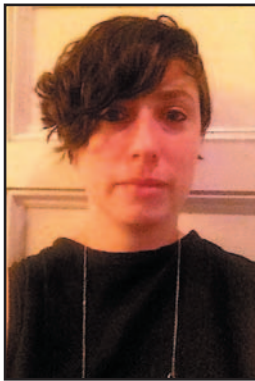
I'm dreaming of rolls of body that I can feel  
and feeling the beginning of something  
like dessert or like hope, a mirage

I'm a white girl from Long Island is true  
and how I feel some of the time but not in the  
nine nail salons kind of way

This penchant for poor taste in tops didn't come easy  
This is a rough cut drive to eschew what I want  
to disguise my voice as a sandflea

which has no genitals but probably does.

## Emily Brandt



## The Eighth Day

Two lines stitched by jets, your hem is so high  
I could slip in my prayer hand and then pull  
you apart, open you, expose you sky,  
enclose cool clouds in my warm mouth, gurgle  
a lullaby. I could stretch up my arms  
coil them around your coy weightlessness,  
and pinch gently each of your nimbus charms.  
This is the beginning of our tryst.  
The bed is useless. The table-top too.  
When your pants are a hail storm, I'm panting  
to pull what can't be pulled down, to undo  
what's been undone by turned sinners chanting.  
When god leaves me cold, all my hope's in  
tangible sky, my parachute open.

## Exceptional

All the oysters in the sea  
fit neat in this mouth

All the anything you want  
if you want bad  
enough

Shells drip from her hair  
her wanting hair

this town is (all towns are) small

Giving head for a boat  
bound away from want

I want to be brain surgeon Ballerina I want I want in the CIA

I want to be highway patrol I want to be national guard Senator To marry a senator

Full-time on-track the Nation's Basketball Ass

I want to be Jeff Koons Soluble I want to be David Lynch I want

to be Walter White Another white

I want mansion I want your company To dive

All the oysters in the sea

drive their wanting mouths  
seams the size of dinner plates

make of my wanting salable pearls

Emily Brandt (<http://www.emilybrandt.com>) is the author of three chapbooks including *Sleeptalk or Not At All*, recently released by Horse Less Press. She's a co-founding editor of *No, Dear*, web acquisitions editor for VIDA, and a contributing writer for *Weird Sister*.

# ChiaLun Chang



## Don't be sad,

your life is great because you have so many friends.

I hope I can't remember.  
However, I do.

When you nervously smiled at me,  
the way you touched my palms,  
you smelled like hidden coffee cups.

I hope I understand. Just a little bit more.  
It's fine not to understand.

Is it fine to die, too?  
How about I choose a way to burn down your house, leap between a  
breath and  
commit suicide?

My dad wants to look at the pictures of my school.  
But he never calls and reads my mind.

We sat together. Your shoulder was touching my arm.  
You have pulled me closer with your disease.  
You're driving me away with a nicer suit.  
Above your dignity,

those flowers are dirty, they come back every year.  
Stop talking darkness,  
yesterday is here and I'm waiting for my doorman to turn on the virus.

## A wake up call for Penny Chen

Honey, when we lost

rending our hair, crumple our underpants  
and watering our contact lenses would be better  
than a superficial  
smile

you will be fine  
before Okay comes to the town  
why don't we have a cup of palm wine  
with half-full ice

before the night darkened into our skins,  
the southern time grown into a pair of sandals,  
the ink melted on your face

"Sadness cannot save children."  
You proclaimed  
when we crossed the boarder  
as if I slaughtered young souls, worms and kind vendors

dear, if i could save them,  
i would spin around and learn the persuasion  
but i only stand and touch the contour of Angkor Wat  
alone

before the moon brighter than a scale  
my ego takes a walk  
your temper flutters mildly away

after we become bees  
both of us line up to fly  
in the poor century

## How to Be a Baby

talk in a high and innocent pitch  
wink one time, then open your eyes widely  
be annoying and scream out  
cry with catarrh everywhere

be jealous of sisters or brothers  
hide their slippers on the roof  
smile when papa and mama take only you out  
cousins aren't cool enough to be played with  
let's paint together on the wall

eat your own shit  
try to find pubes from others  
collect boogers

have an infeasible dream  
want to date the hottest guy and girl in the class  
assume everyone is watching you and your ugly date  
quiet lover of yours is the most popular person at school  
laugh hard in the subway

over 15 years old is as old as 70

go nowhere  
stay in hometown  
could not be frightened by a tomorrow afternoon  
walk to midtown alone in a beach house

## Expectation

blue apples  
melt easers  
liquid papers  
burn graduator  
dutch cat  
drop gravity

Asian Hasidic  
slow internet  
handmade forest  
city addiction  
stupid personality

## Patriotism

you do it  
as

sky needs tree trunks  
a pencil needs joints  
an afternoon needs indicators

taking off wet socks  
and we can swim  
around buffer zone  
with space

(and)  
aliens

ChiaLun Chang was born and raised in Taipei, Taiwan and lives in New York City.

## Choose Yr Own Adventure

What if I was a little girl  
Born in a post 9-11 world  
Cartoon drawing with star earrings on it  
Really don't wanna hear it

Why do I even work here  
Who even am I  
Archangel Lucifer  
Things that shoot across the sky

I started crying while I was brushing my teeth  
when I realized I'm the same age D was when she died  
Then I realized I'm actually one year older  
which made me a) cry harder or b) jolt to a stop

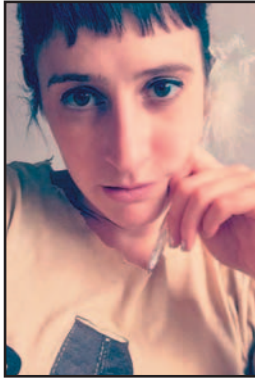
The guy jackhammering the street outside  
yelled "smallest hole ever," then hooted three times  
Dad tells me I'm in my "working years"  
I'm running for the train

Louis CK at the show said we should all just walk  
around looking  
for things to eat, then shit it out, it's that simple.  
Is it a) mansplaining life is it  
b) secret garden overgrown w/ vines

I got this thing in a Cracker Jack box  
I thought of my grandma's purple wallet  
Plastic gem flowers blooming out of it  
Balled-up dollars stuffed inside

I call back after the interview  
Try soooo hard not to uptalk  
Choose yr own adventure  
A robin's egg blue tile  
I found it in the dirt when I was five

## Marisa Crawford



## Freddy Krueger Is a Cutter

He loves to cut himself  
In your dreams  
Then laugh at how  
He doesn't bleed.

I dropped my work ID in the middle of the street  
it opened up a portal in the pavement  
I know I said  
that I was done  
but I'm gonna keep goin'.

Things that grow out of pavement  
Glittery tear that rolls out of my eye  
Girls who dress for work like they're dressing  
for the most important social event of their lives.

I'm disappointed with myself that I didn't  
return the sweater, but happy with myself  
for going to the gym.

Why did I throw out  
all my striped things like  
where did they go where  
are they where am I.  
I'm in the basement.  
I'm in the clouds.  
I'm in the bathroom  
listening to all the pissing sounds

Sometimes I imagine myself as a cool  
grown-up. Wears cowboy boots  
to work. Leather bag  
full of feelings  
like accessories  
I'll allow myself the bad line /  
I'll do it every time.

### Poem After One Jack & Ginger While Home Alone Listening to Steve Miller Spotify Station

When you're away I send you bride emojis.

I text Seth wait is Riders on the Storm the worst song  
ever when probably the whole world is  
sleeping.

Gonna wake my neighbors it's so embarrassing

Landslide comes on but I can't sing cause my voice  
hurts too much.

I told Seth the Smashing Pumpkins cover was the first  
version I ever heard. (He said, oh woah.)

In Stairway to Heaven when he says, there's a feeling  
I get when I look to the west, is he talking  
about California? Cause I was.

Favorite thing about Wayne's World: No Stairway or  
how my dad quotes the Alice Cooper part  
sometimes or how I want to write in all my  
vacuum copy "this vacuum certainly does  
suck."

Favorite thing about Becca: that her favorite movie  
is Wayne's World, or that she's into Zack  
Morris cell phone as a poetry aesthetic.

Prompt: finish the poem before Stairway ends.

I'm making a dance in my kitchen to Purple Haze.  
More like an elaborate cheer or color guard  
routine. Marching in place w. flags.

Simple Man by Lynard Skynard comes on. I'd never  
heard it before but I'm leaning my back  
against the refrigerator, I'm a simple kind of  
man.

Ew the album cover for Hotel California is an actual  
hotel in California it's disgusting.

Were the 80s disgusting?

Was it disgusting when I was born?

Bride after bride like some chick with soooooo many  
husbands.

My emojis don't even work, I have to google "moon  
emoji" to say goodnight to Seth, it's so Zack  
Morris cell phone to talk about it.

Favorite thing about Seth: that The Big Lebowski's  
on Netflix or that I have a log of our AOL  
Instant Messenger conversations  
somewhere on my computer.

iPhone doesn't autocorrect aol and it's like, respect yr  
elders.

Favorite thing about Dave: how he alienated the  
whole class of Umass incoming freshman  
when he emceed me and Heather's Saved by  
the Bell trivia at the orientation talent show.

How I kept a condom in my wallet like some fucking  
jock finger.

How I made missing posters for his drawing journal  
on the library Xerox machine.

How we grew up into better versions.

My dad tells me it gives him a feeling in his stomach  
to call his mother so he never does.

Woulda gone to bed early but I'm still up up up up  
up up up up up up up up shout out to Ani.

The sluttiest underwear I own are the ones my mom  
put in my Easter basket.

How did we become poets, what a stupid destiny.

How in the summer sometimes I'd sleep head-to-toe  
in your bed, listen to the birds whir  
overhead.

Shout out to Brain Damage/Eclipse.  
New moon emoji.

### Ryan Gosling Wearing a T-shirt of Macaulay Culkin Wearing a T-shirt of Ryan Gosling Wearing a T-shirt of Macaulay Culkin

Are you ever on the subway looking

at a slideshow of pictures you took of yourself.

Listening to The Breeders Divine Hammer.

May as well be a mirror.

Sometimes when I look into the camera

I say, I want a different life. But I know

that I mean that I want a different job.

One in which I get to see a different ocean

allow my hair to sway and curl and crash like a wave.

Do you ever feel like you've got something

waiting on your clipboard

and you've gotta find a blank space to

paste and find out what it is.

My lightning bolt earrings

knocked me out. I wrote the subject line

Heavy Metals, then I had an "orgasm"

it felt so good.

Fell backward into

a boyfriend black hole.

How I used to make checklists in my

mind of things to tell you. How I still do.

Marisa Crawford (<http://marisacrawford.net/>) is the author of *The Haunted House* (Switchback Books), *8th Grade Hippie Chic* (Immaculate Disciples Press), and *Big Brown Bag* (Gazing Grain Press). She is founding editor of the feminist blog *Weird Sister* and lives in Williamsburg, Brooklyn.

sin loi

the horizontal horizon  
 stolen stem waves  
 as if a rose were dipped in water  
 and brushed against the face  
 her nose, nudging, nuzzling, nibbling

suddenly we both lurch forward  
 at the same instant

hair ends up all tousled  
 and skin as slick  
 as if we had lain  
 under the foam

tim sum [sweetheart]

the smell of your hair, up close:  
 mint

the color of your hand, up close:  
 flesh

the sound of your voice, up close:  
 starlings

the taste of your tongue, up close:  
 sweet soy drink

No one else

Yr beauty bubbling up  
 in my blood  
 pushing my pulse

Yr hair like nectar in my mouth  
 yr tongue pushing like a scepter  
 in my hair

Manh Yee, draw yr legs, yr long legs,  
 Over the bed in a wide circle

poem written  
 in the blood of fruit

Not to  
 Have what  
 I can't have.

ming sing [movie star]

swept by sweetness,  
 I see the child in your face  
 your broad nose like a fan

eyes dark as wet shingles  
 and the lines tattooed over your eyes  
 like smudges on a long wall

it's when you're laughing  
 lighthearted and light-skinned  
 that I know this  
 it's when the earring is flash knuckled  
 against your dark hair  
 like snow on a blue dahlia

Jim Feast



gya kay  
*[for my daughter, Gya Ka, age 8]*

braced so hard  
 Ana  
 braced so hard against  
 Gya Ka ho let  
 have to know  
 Ana ho

no force on this earth can get  
 you what you want

to live yr real problems

little  
 crying  
 Ana  
 crying, crying  
 little girl  
 crying, crying so hard  
 Yr shoulder blades and shoulders are covered with tears

fill in the blanks

Q. Absolute happiness \_\_\_\_\_.  
 A. is surrounded by a kind of stupor.  
 Q. Absolute joy: \_\_\_\_\_.  
 A. lashes to lashes.

why do I know so

in the night's panel  
 yr body – long strong  
 yellow bell

all that is  
 authentically real

all that  
 under the foil moment  
 all

Q/A

Q. Why is the goddess so sexy?  
 A. Tracer elements.  
 Q. Why is the goddess so chilling?  
 A. A brown-red mark on her ankle.

Nhi chérie

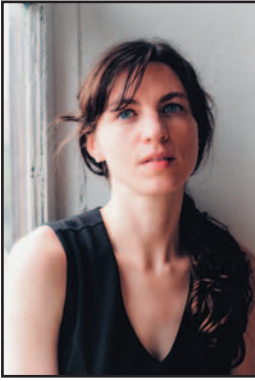
lost, listless (walking)  
 trying to impersonate the shifting city  
 (or impassionate it)  
 in its decline  
 dead enter – the dead cadence of  
 its decadence

think of her scarf on an escarpment  
 her line of her hairline  
 soles of her feet  
 wet net of her hair  
 sprinkling and sparkling against  
 the earrings  
 crepe, crepuscular strands on the pillow  
 over her cheek, neck  
 skin kind of a kind color (tawny,  
 torrid)  
 a sore worked into your mouth  
 nose nudging me

have I dreamed you (drumming in my ears)?  
 have I folded you? have I followed you?  
 fond of you when I found you  
 freed you, fretted you  
 not frayed, not afraid,  
 not mined, not mine

Jim Feast (<http://ottermagazine.com/article/a-review-of-barbara-hennings-a-day-like-today/>) is a member of the Unbearables writers group and author, with Ron Kolm, of the novel *Neo Phobe* and, with Gary Null, of *AIDS: A Second Opinion*.

## Jess Feldman



### BQE

18-wheeled ocean its minivans  
merging one wimpy left turn signal  
and sea oats colonize the Swales  
Buoyed outside apartment complexes  
the handwritten pleas: Dear UPS  
Please Fed-Ex Leave my package  
I am begging you

### Hero's Welcome

Natural History museum arrangements of pheasant, grouse  
among the lichen When I touch the birds, they stir, run out  
under my supernal hands The disco ball at the VFW scatters  
all my hopes so they are fields tore up by early Okies  
Everyone I don't speak to anymore swallows rosaries  
places blame on a dog I never owned

### Brunch

Half-starved girlfriends  
tweet memes about pizza  
compact inedible  
universe snaps  
under sugar-glazed  
fingers I see them  
espadrilles stagger  
over hot pavement just  
as a rancher's horse  
unaccustomed to bell boots  
must regain the limits  
of the earth beneath  
Poor ungulates  
Burdensome being  
another woman  
shelving grandmother's  
upright piano  
in the chest cavity  
and no lick of how  
to make it go

### Leftovers

I walked past all the money  
none of it followed me home  
People as disappointed in the weather  
as they are about their bodies  
Downpour, pale skin, heatwave, flab  
Without the money the remnants  
of last week's groceries scatter  
Lonely last hamburger bun  
you are dinner

### Staycation

Just as soon as I  
enter the trees  
the wild ate up all  
my food: BBQ chips,  
granola bar, apple  
My new wild  
body, a lifespan  
thriving, failing  
One tall fire  
out of human hands

### The game is up

When it rains, all the cats disappear  
They bundle up under the trees, slide by  
the trellis & are gone

### Heaven Mantra

I'm watching the paid staff prepare the banquet hall  
for another wedding Dogs lean out against their leashes  
DONT WANT TO GO THATAWAYS one trash-filled alley  
Owner just wants to go home Excuse me Sir are the walls  
of this enclosure chocolate or steel In death these same kids  
people my one free hour demanding donations for basketball  
teams that never were Impure thoughts Roaches in the cabinets  
& no one asked them YOU ARE LUCKY to be here

### Moving the Aquarium from Castle Hill

The beluga died  
5,000 visitors a day scan  
empty water for miracles  
There's weeping In the park  
people armed with hula  
hoops devil sticks  
make something of  
their lives start smiling

### That was yesterday

Dropped my phone in a puddle. Friends like chough slipped through sleeves  
of the one tree forest and evaporated. When they vanished, all the horses  
standing around in my heart drowned. There was music once but I lost my moves;  
the got-out-of-a-parking-ticket throwdown, the so-drunk-but-so-cute faceplant.  
I was left clutching 21 bridles with no way home

Jess Feldman's (<https://twitter.com/jessfeldman>) poetry has appeared or is forthcoming in *An Art Project*, *HOUSEGUEST*, *Transom*, *Tuesday*, *Vinyl*, and elsewhere. Her manuscript "Call It a Premonition" was chosen by Zachary Schomburg as winner of the 2015 BOAAT Winter Chapbook Competition. Nai Vasha photo.

## Odd Numbers

Outside the bakery on a wicker chair,  
beneath an awning, dry of rain,  
an empty coffee cup,  
self-service,  
no staff.  
Sideways, back against the bricks,  
ready at a moment's notice,  
dressed for work, or church,  
eyes closed,  
head heavy,  
fallen like death  
onto her chest,  
long breath in...  
long breath out...  
She starts, like a doll  
raised from inertia,  
round eyes glistening white,  
her voice still inside the dream,  
"A dollar? Five?"

She takes the bill,  
'thank you',  
smiles teeth like buildings  
after an earthquake.  
Then lights out again,  
trusting luck,  
oh, sweet invisibility.

Next,  
"A dollar? Five?"  
"No!" – he turns away,  
not as generous  
as the first.

This avenue, these streets,  
once belonged to her.  
Now she waits for muffin eaters.  
Sparrows on the sidewalk  
peck for crumbs.

## I Lost You on the Train

I lost you on the train  
in a burning country.  
We'd traveled there,  
continuing the argument.  
At passport check  
they rifled through  
our pockets,  
finding only loose change,  
neglecting razorblades  
beneath our tongues,  
poisons hidden in our hands.

You vanished suddenly,  
that evening on a sacred hill,  
the hour of prayer slanting toward  
the valley of a saint,  
where I awoke, wordless,  
and you slept through  
your own departure.

## Montmartre

A single note thrums  
the lit up tits of Sacré Coeur,  
pink areole glowing in ascent  
against a streak of water cloud.  
A dream of pigeons  
fed on streets  
crumbling into equinox,  
a city night as soft, as lost  
as tender hands.

## Bonny Finberg



## Blue Is More than Gray

Calvados because there is no *vin chaud*.  
My baby just cares for me followed by  
the thump and drag of an Algerian love song.  
Seams of chance  
move without expectations,  
though the hope for continuity remains  
despite the authorities' demand for  
documents,  
a wall of self-reference,  
precedents and subsequent unknowns.  
*Besame mucho,*  
*Besame culo,*  
English, Arab, Spanish jam session,  
dangling hand reaching for change.  
Irony descends the stairs  
headed for a piss,  
while we pass, unnoticed,  
walking advertisements.  
How much penetrates?  
How much falls away?  
Just keep going.  
Maybe something misconstrued,  
a slip of the imagination,  
O that putative disease.

They kiss inside the corner booth,  
the music throbs against the walls,  
they leave embraces  
heavy in the beery air,  
without a trace,  
charging all the corners with a pulsing void.

## Prayer for the Messiah of the Broken Heart

God has no heart,  
the heart is human.  
Dogs have hearts.  
The hearts of birds beat  
like dying stars,  
the whale's grieving heart contracts,  
expands,  
contracts, expands in monumental time.  
The ocean floor is made to tremble.

A human heart to lead us,  
in our poor distempered hearts  
before the breath of dragons at our back.

All that glitters loses spark,  
and all that dies is then reborn.  
Who really wants to take such leaps of faith,  
believe there's more than this?  
I am unborn,  
dying life before my eyes,  
even marble  
crumbles into dust.  
The heat that warms but doesn't burn,  
a simple exhalation of our common breath.  
Extinguished,  
replaced,  
hands to drum lay the feast,  
the myth of the return  
is merely that, a myth.  
Really, only one long breath sustains  
the force that through the green fuse  
drives the flower.  
All this theory,  
concept, dream, prediction,  
longing for the past,  
may be the highest form  
of all creation,  
or an error of some mutant branch,  
or just the haunting of a broken heart.

## Haiku

The car horn beeps  
a prolonged note  
beside Corelli's stream.  
Synchronicity.

## Fashion Week

It's Fashion Week.  
The subway tracks repeat:  
Magnificent,  
Magnificent,  
Magnificent.

## All the books are boxed

All the books are boxed,  
palimpsests of dust on pages,  
blue, brown, gray edges,  
soot and coffee stains  
on window ledges,  
borrowed faces,  
spoke the words,  
painters came  
to hide the traces,  
no Rosetta stone, no shards,  
repeat us in the empty cases.

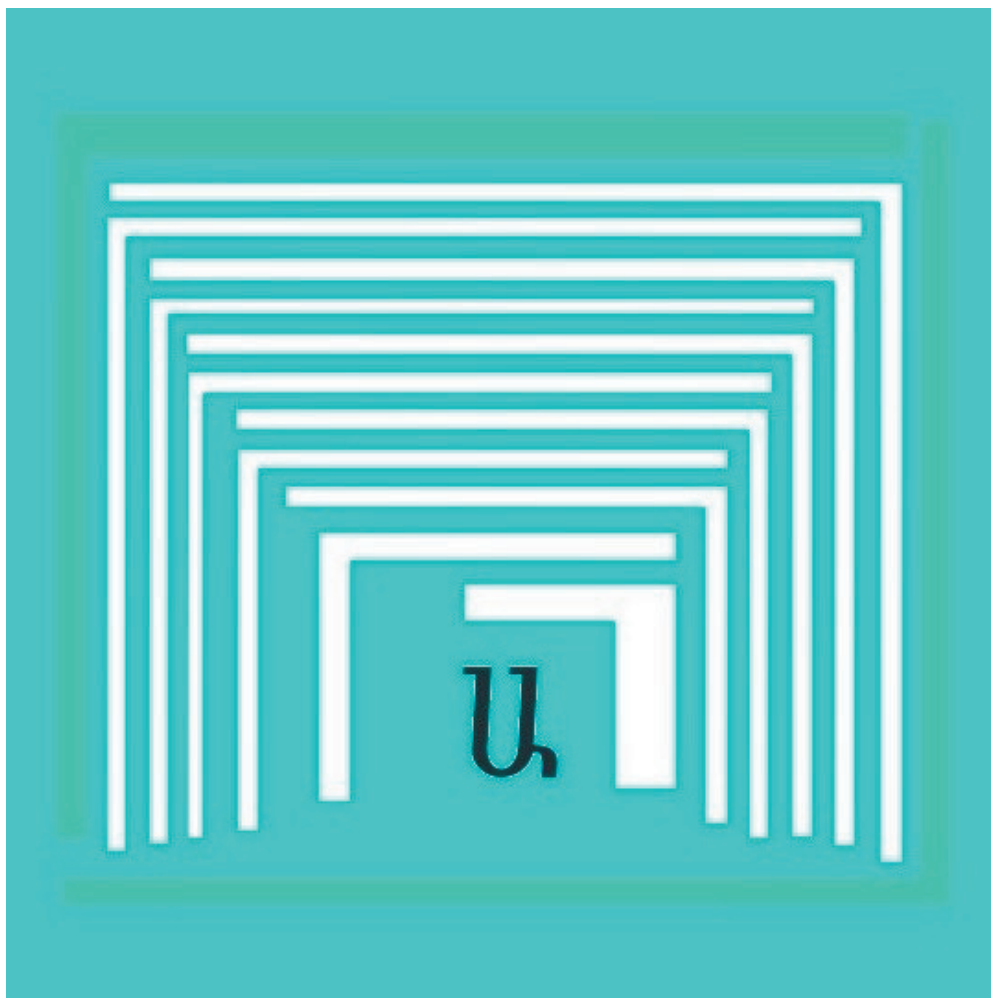
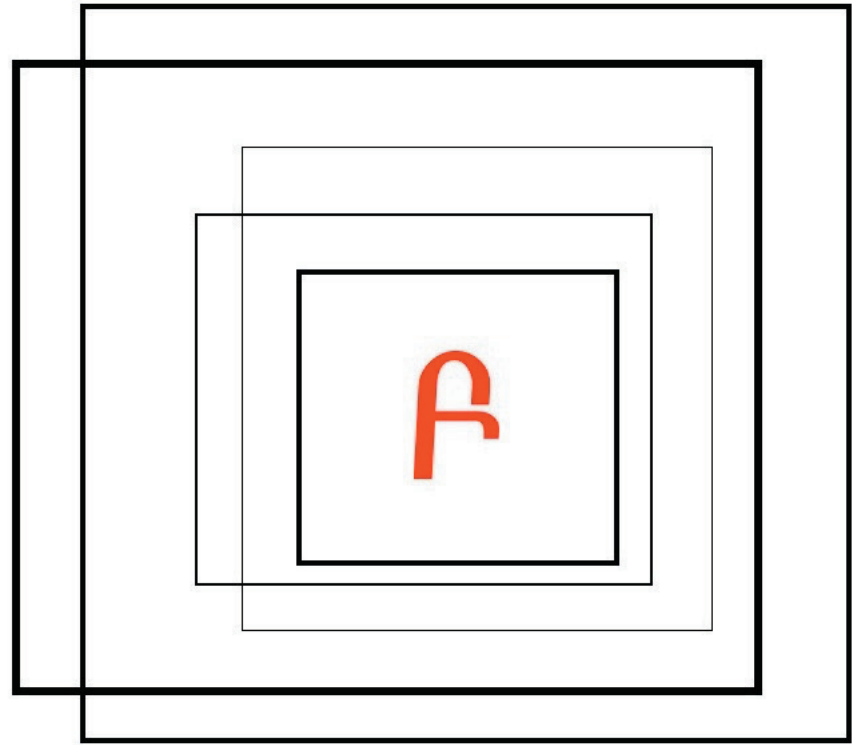
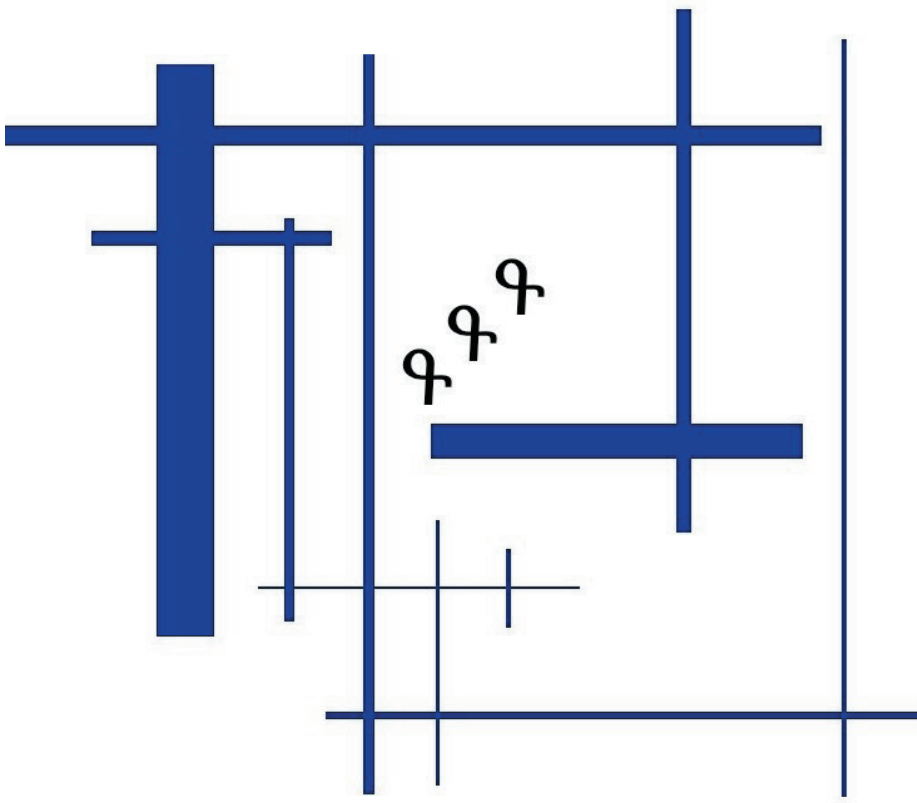


## Alina Gregorian



### Armenian Alphabet

These are images of the first three letters of the Armenian alphabet. See the rest in gif form: [https://www.instagram.com/armenian\\_alphabet/](https://www.instagram.com/armenian_alphabet/)



Alina Gregorian (<http://www.alinagregorian.com/>) is the author of the chapbooks *Navigational Clouds* (Monk Books) and *Flags for Adjectives* (DIEZ). She curates Triptych Readings, runs a video poetry series on *The Huffington Post*, and lives in Greenpoint, Brooklyn.

## Make Vibrate Anyway

A woman leaning on a rock. Her whole magnificent floor. It's like a very good distraction, and I become a painter again. Crowding destruction, unending our lives huge and good. Actually, vision operates in a threatening cloud. The stuff of her rock shape. I just painted it and was unmistakably done absorbing her. Imitator crumbles consumed by images flying from the tip of a nose. I was walking with Duchamp, and Duchamp told me to take the scaffold off, and "You think too much," someone said. You see, even Duchamp chooses to be tragic sometimes. Crowding my woman rock out.

That there was no end beyond thinking. Momentary exhaustion, like numbers and sheer choices. So much a screen my pain. My impulse is to really allow you to become a shape—a rectangle in the air. Identification with one warm object. What do you mean, my heart? I was putting mine away to become devoted to some other scribble. Auto scribble, and say more. A retrospective in the habit of a shape. Happens. Is happening.

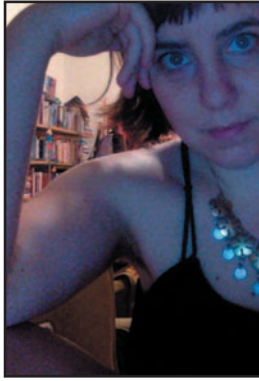
A woman leaning on a whole era, existence, the feeling. She leans on color. The way one bumps into one's inaudible mind and triggers every rubbing overhead to begin. Maybe it's not Duchamp but just some guy smoking near a woman who is leaning on de Kooning. Well, the crudeness is finished. Winter hybrid ahead quivering. "Inchworm," you say. My descendants are in a cab now. Obviously tangible. They are in bed now. My descendants are light bulbs, aren't they? She telephones. I'm sort of a body still. Chronic meaning and aesthetic appetite—any mark you make I will chew. I go belong in your pocket now. As non-art happens, do you sometimes preexist semi-visible behind the persona? Puppet play hammers verbally. The leap fathoms air, creating it.

Yes. What about being crude? I think I'm free as recognition scribble. Magenta sanctuary, more involved battle scenes. Memory avidly folds afloat spotless. Can meanings be mud and self-taught? The snow in dethrone, I've written like by fire. Who are poets? I guess a babbling accumulation forgets about escape. Polarized in fantasy. What I really chew changing. Call it a dark soul paints himself or some shit. I can't figure the clock and not worry. Means: from life night I scraped out, propelled to be a terrific flesh and bone. Wax talk his heart doesn't a moment say canvas. Can you clean ambivalence or have anything left to say? To kill off translation in the death of a previous pausing. All surfaces, problems, laughing in the deluge.

A lesser sound leans upon me last year. Vibrating winter of forms bulging and smoke going up. Really, I am looking for I don't know what. The center is me burning in duplicate. Erosion of rocks and the whole damn thing is mass. Can I see you float one loved line? Let go gesture. Let go limbs. I say secretly I needed a color field. Secretly, a rectangle in the air disgusts me, and you—bite off this canvas mirror space would you? My instincts are a creeping crux I refuse. Shrug a mirror off. Continue catalysts. Continue pursuit. Continue being plastic, know what I mean? Out in the street my inkling is to conjure a drag. It felt good smoking next to you living things, this being memos to myself. These power-shake Goya shibboleths. I could never. This is a poem about Goya. Goya substitutes for me, and chews off my leg. Laughing as we cry into a paint bucket and scum drag mud bags me a new one to hammer into place.

All of a sudden it's morning in the house of sordid swallowing. I grabbed not hurt my heart. To drive cipher into commune. "Communicate with this," he said and sucked my toe off. If you take the scaffold home with you, life could be so much more optical. "Live your illusion's worth," he was saying. Attention as prayer, suspicion as emptied object. My last year leaning, and all I have is this toe. You—why don't you have any lonely language left? Duchamp was wearing a really red hat and playing that he could jump planets. Much as I saw it happen. I'm saying that my heart has honked before, and we have all puked in the laps of our loved ones, so what does that trigger?

# Anna Gurton-Wachter



## The Fall Shells

I.

Enablers living in my pocket square. Even the sidewalk is an enabler. I'm tired of our ozone layer and all the prayers I say, I call them greetings. A word I lost that I'm sure was charming once. See, I'm acting out at authorship, local to a plain song, forgoing the sonic void. What Micaela wants is for the seasons to be rethought. Why wouldn't I take the night back from her? Where will we be when we are remembering how she described the future of hot and cold? That day before she left the city for good.

II.

I remember with shock everything my divine moment said to me. Whirls of images only possible in a lukewarm vapor of thought. Swords flowering, becoming not swords, — something else. I know this street is quiet and loves me back. It's better than tossing sounds into sounds, the night kicks lax love, the decision to become a woman again. Minute by minute I routinely avoid getting out of bed. The conversation I had with the music playing through the wall. The conversation reflected back at me. Why put off seeing in, seeing as, so surrendering?

III.

I'm walking in a deserted mind caviar. Deluxe. I push back the curtain bangs. Someone says, "Does nobody come up to your apartment and fuck you ever?" I'm acting out a child's island. In one memory I have I'm standing on top of a pedestal and some large force makes a rain machine rain on me. My hands are against the door, watching through the glass at the rain's open fire. I want to trust someone with my likeness like you. The striptease rotates inside me. A snapshot of clouds cut off by my pillow. What will it mean to have lived here so long waiting for the air to clear? I can watch the police rescue the police again. I can picture handcuffs floating in through the open window. They carry me across my last flame sky.

IV.

Today a muddy river stops at the foot of my bed. All of the poets are fucking there, — distantly misshapen and fucking. The face of pleasure has urgency, asks to shoot first. Freedom is a kind of light that weighs down the body stage. One of the poets recedes inside of me, carried to defeat. Who am I face to face with? Who mumbles against my strategic debris? I had to hold up my cave face interior, in the air, and say, "What do I do with this?" The joy of living was already a hot sheet of lava and stones pressed up against a fugitive fuck. Why describe the earth's walls at all? Think about the future crossing a dark wave.

Anna Gurton-Wachter is a poet, editor, and archivist. Her poems have appeared in *Elderly*, *Publication Studio*, *The Organism for Poetic Research's PELT*, and elsewhere. Her chapbook *Cyrus* was published by Portable Press @ Yo-Yo Labs. She co-edits DoubleCross Press and lives in Sunset Park, Brooklyn where she parks her sunset.

## Just to Stay Afloat

Birds depend upon branches  
and wind current to stay afloat.  
I open an email, and an old  
boyfriend writes, "How could  
you forget the color of my eyes?"  
My brother calls to tell me  
that his other eye has started  
to cloud over. Perhaps when  
he meditates too long, his eyes  
roll back, his blood pressure  
lowers and cuts off the circulation  
to his optic nerve. Consider  
the pressure from the light  
of the sun. Consider the long  
term effects of agent orange.  
Wake up from a nap thinking  
about how small our actual  
store of energy is. Cloud  
computing strikes a tender  
nerve with the rank and file.

## Hallelujah

Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah,"  
but someone else singing it.  
In the past we wouldn't expect  
to live even this long and we  
no longer expect consistency  
and honesty from politicians.  
Cows can go for hours with  
out making a sound. My love  
noisily eats some grapes  
and talks about when he was  
twenty-four, living in California  
with a girlfriend. He left  
and she went off with a dealer  
and later died in a car accident.  
Her parents couldn't find him.  
Later they said she had called  
out for him. Fighting and sex,  
that's mostly what they had.  
Passion. Ya! we yell at the cows,  
they call out for their calves  
and my love pops another  
grape into his mouth and  
the calves bellow back—me, me!

## Text Me Please

The psyche is often well  
hidden with social media  
building layers of distraction.  
*I found your slip hanging  
in the bathroom.* Ravi  
will never forget the reading  
he gave when an elderly  
gent shouted, That's not  
Ravi Shankar! When  
a person feels lonely or  
excluded his or her skin  
literally becomes colder.  
*I will sleep with it.* Chronic  
sleep loss lowers tolerance  
for pain. As the lust for  
gold skyrockets, the demand  
for imitation jewelry  
grows by leaps and bounds.  
*With us sex is a way  
to channel emotions.* *I could  
get lost in you.* Roaming  
New York City with his camera,  
Leon Levinstein once said,  
It's a very lonely occupation  
if you want to call it that.

# Barbara Henning



## In A Small Cloud

A poet tells me that he has been ill.  
His breath stinks. Unconsciously,  
I move backwards. Maybe  
I'm repelling, too. When Allen  
was dying we were in a restaurant  
and people stared at him. His teeth  
were falling out. It's hard to be  
presentable when you're ill.  
Backward doesn't necessarily  
mean we are going backwards.  
Walking home from the Poetry  
Project, I tap my leg and count  
while holding my breath. Toe-  
tapping rhythms. Today it's possible  
to book a round-the-world  
air ticket simply by tapping  
a smartphone. So cold. Fierce.  
Mouth breathing can frost your  
lens. I refuse to cough. When  
I'm on a mobile device I'm more  
likely to be presentable. After  
passing through the gate, I start  
coughing. Why, the father asks  
his son, do you always cry when  
you have to do your homework?  
I don't know, the boy says.  
We're not really going backwards.  
We're standing side by side  
in a small cloud of our own breath.

## Unnameable

In the graveled garden  
behind Unnameable Books  
Patricia Spears Jones  
is reading her poems.  
A large fish fly (or  
something like that)  
is perched on the wire  
overhead. Glass-shattering,  
flip-flopping, like  
the mayor of London  
sliding down a zip wire.  
In the middle of the crowd,  
a poet lights up, nervously  
flicking his cigarette.  
I read my poems, stumble  
and drop my cell phone,  
the glass shattering.  
Something clearly is  
going awry. Underground  
subway construction  
makes windows up above  
break. I cough. Patricia  
coughs. It'll all go back  
to normal, I think, without  
going into a conflict zone.  
Then another lights up,  
then another and another.  
Finally David K asks  
the smokers just for now  
kindly please go to the rear.

*"In A Small Cloud," "Text Me Please," and "Unnameable" previously appeared in A Day Like Today (Negative Capability Press).*

Barbara Henning (<http://barbarahenning.com/>) is the author of three novels and seven collections of poetry. Poetry books include *A Day Like Today* (Negative Capability), and *My Autobiography* (United Artists Books). She lives in The East Village and teaches at Long Island University in Brooklyn. Michah Saperstein photo.

## The Construction of a Mechanical Bird

To come here is to say I will look at light  
through simple trees, but count the number

of small-particles dust masks I have been  
given to see what began as radicals syphoned

into ivy tunnels has been cast into the shape  
we know as bird.

Its hollow bank sized torso spins into a screw  
thread mold. When bird carries glass panes

across the sky an empty room rises from the hole  
in the ground moving earth into earth.

## Jen Hyde



## In Mizpah

The wall cutout lights the room where you sleep and I  
bless the dreams sent to you through this narrow pass.  
Bulb gardens in Paynes Gray corridors bloom gilt tea sets  
and piles of geodesic printed silks. Always you, at rest,  
organize yourself among the mess. I admire your knees'  
cantilever from these velvet chairs. In tweed and twill  
and navy blue your hushed disdain for color, the décor  
of architecture, guides my eye to slants of morning  
sun across the floor. While one of us turns on polyester  
the other tucks, a tessellated crease in the duvet. We are  
held together in slender hours until through windows  
the sky piques pink and glaucous birds descend into  
the white framework we started with to reveal that not only  
do our curtains shade us from city noise but also present  
us to one another, aerial contortions on a quiet stage.

## In the Year of the Ox

I opened my mouth  
into a door frame,  
an exit, a kou—a horse

razing orange over  
slow mechanical birds  
becoming as air raids

and morning exercise.  
She counts to eight.  
Calls me Lin, a grove

of trees, a hybrid  
lemon and tangelo  
with seeds split

to form fruit never  
right for lemonade.  
Through the kitchen

window I never rode  
a bike, only watched  
the driveway pour

over dust, the road  
we move across  
watching color

appear until the sea  
shows the way out  
or a rising curve.

## Red Peony

After her body poured out she flew  
a red bird in night, red alongside her .  
Your hand reaches out but glass blocks  
you from catching her wings  
and shriveling, she falls.  
Into the sky, a deep maroon.  
Look at your embroidered robe.  
The petals breaking open frame  
the good breaths she took  
when she was.

## What Color is the Universe?

That was a wall I whisper  
the first time she looks away  
then back again. She stares  
still & still into sky butchered  
& damp she absorbs the light  
she scribbles connections  
collects June in sand buckets.  
Some nights a blanket some nights  
stars are the heads we hold in our bed.  
I think you're a melon I tell her  
in a bedtime story when she sleeps.

## Dearest

Late August is a time for both dreamers  
and lapsers to find their way. This  
morning I am both, thinking of you  
in bed. Are you still tilting my ewer?  
I am still on the third floor. When you  
left an earthquake cracked my biped  
bird fountain. Now white pigeons are  
fending for themselves while I refold  
the letters you send by mail. How will  
you see them on your next visit? Will  
you search hard for the new creases  
in my face? I sleep hard on my pillow,  
call out the names of stars on some nights.  
Alpheratz, Ruchbah, Sirius, Chort. There's  
another I won't share. He likes to stay  
hidden. We are both easily frightened  
by sudden, ambulant gestures. Tonight  
the full moon seems an everyday appearance.  
Tonight we're standing on either side of dusk  
making fingerprints, brushing air, starting drizzle.

## Poem for Amelia

Since you plunged  
we've been looking  
for your remnant eye,

once found a calcified  
sea rock—part atoll.  
A fuselage from Harbor

Grace to Paris flew.  
Was it you parting  
two clouds yesterday?

Dear Amelia, I have  
a painter's longing  
to find an edge of sky.

And I have seen  
your mute swan,  
arising, aloft, her lift

deployed while  
my sun moves  
between clouds

light fading  
immeasurably  
over the vowels.

## Tony Iantosca

### Today there were shapes

Today there were shapes  
and I moved in the shapes  
and the shapes, in some way,  
moved in me although saying so  
is a frivolous and irresponsible  
use of language as it isn't proveable  
by someone like me. Someone  
bumped her head on a desk  
and I looked up something  
on the internet. The shapes  
are a union light breeds  
by not being able to enter  
the spaces between where the shapes  
join each other. Joining the workforce  
means sometimes sitting still and sitting  
still is a prohibition of anything  
that happened before sitting there  
that might affect the individual  
in any way that would interfere  
with the act or non-act  
of sitting still. The shapes were  
nonetheless creating the illusion  
of moving and even if I was the one  
who happened to be moving  
I feel sure that when I remember  
the shapes it's to say that  
they've all passed me. My ears  
begin to adopt a pain as though  
it were transmitted on air  
like the radio broadcasters  
say we're on air to explain why  
we can hear their speech while they're  
talking even if they're not here  
with this ill-defined 'us'. With this  
sentence I'm beginning to lose  
where the poem goes and why  
the shapes look like that and when  
the swelling begins on the skin  
underneath the hair. On the internet the shapes  
ripple a little bit and there is a morning  
that's cold followed by a series of longer  
mornings that slowly shed this cold  
that has no shape and thus is harder  
to describe in literal terms unless  
we were to stick to measurements  
whose information changes depending  
on who you ask about it. But don't talk to whoever  
you've forgotten even if you think they can hear  
your speech while you're talking even while  
they're not here with you. Now I've lost track  
of the bodies and the shapes that they  
were or are in relation to where they were  
inside the other shapes that were with you and I  
if you'd like to join me. The restaurant caught fire  
and burnt to the ground in the night and no one came  
until after the fire was finished and the lake was shining  
in the morning just like the morning before that one  
and you'll become more familiar with it the more  
I describe it to you.



*I am having thoughts  
and feelings  
a place populated  
by pine trees—should I tell you  
about them? There is a place  
a person who isn't me  
walking through, evoking  
desires. That's all.*

*In the end  
I turned myself in  
to the job market.  
Don't tell anyone.  
I pick up the phone, engines  
in a mirror—no that can't  
be right. Eliminate one of the  
commas. The source and the truth  
are in the grass with a child, a telephone,  
and the job market.*

*Not the sun. Other  
things for sure, but definitely not  
the sun. Whatever it is or might be  
I think it belongs to me.  
I'm just too busy right now  
and there's all this light*

*Presently there is loss,  
so you're gonna need to give back  
all the stuff that's missing  
because operating without all the desires  
fully met is too much for the mind  
to handle. And anyways I rode  
the train all this way  
with a drunk man whose face  
bled in the Bronx daylight  
so now in the dark  
which isn't real I'm not leaving.  
Look, there's no bread left the long and short day  
took it all as the sun went  
down which happened  
and can be confirmed  
without much effort. Aside from the dark  
that this hunger moves through  
the rest of it is suspect  
and the game of knowing about it  
has grown boring*

Tony Iantosca's ([http://www.greetingsreadings.org/Greetings\\_Readings/Tony\\_Iantosca.html](http://www.greetingsreadings.org/Greetings_Readings/Tony_Iantosca.html)) book *Shut Up, Leaves* came out last year from United Artists Books. He lives in Crown Heights, Brooklyn with some friends.

## From Artisanal Meth

I copy reverie because  
it's what people want

I dream you call me  
a poser in the bar

and I correct you  
You can stack your

morality and build  
a robot elevator

to every stripe of it

I'm not sure how I feel  
about this vocabulary

but there are conferences  
I need to book immediately

I don't want to give anyone  
a shitty experience button

but we forget our charms  
come from somewhere

If I go past this part  
of the neighborhood

the vices open like  
a flower pretending

to be a hole pretending  
to be a flower

both oceans blowing out

I'm walking down this  
open air corridor

looking for a symbol  
of our advancement

but let's be real

this is the time in our  
lives where we send

ourselves the most  
interesting articles

we meet up only to high  
five each other for

the health of our accounts  
what we get away with

and what we're stoked  
about not doing

Someone snaps his fingers  
to make a point and I think

about service, I think about  
refining the way my body moves

in this particular space and  
whether I want that movement

to be an annihilation of presence.

The most successful butler is  
the butler remembered by no one.

I can turn any day into an  
anniversary if it means I can

believe that everything's  
connected. I'm being purpose-

fully vague but mainly because  
everyone else is being loud

and giving in to the default  
behavior. It would be easier

>>>>

## Peter Bogart Johnson



if I just allowed myself to be  
moved by the pictures we

all traffic in but I hold on

to the older media because  
without it I'd have nothing

to hold in my hands as I  
hold my hands up to you.

Talent is only there if  
you want it

we link a million tools  
to our footprint

we need to grow and  
reach the virality

we promised  
holding my hand

against the glass  
to check the heat

the stakes are only  
getting higher but

there are just as many  
influences waiting to

poke at my face and  
nothing that we do

matters which is  
freedom which is in

fact a replacement of  
the obligatory the action

represented by a column

of waving hands like  
a bird or like a church

timing your body to

fold into the wave  
the minute where you

understand that eventually  
you will encounter

a series of arbitrary  
structures that used to

secure you  
but now you relegate

to a list you'll get to  
everything that comes

from this is an efficiency  
is being OK

that being in the world  
means there are multiple

>>>>

industries erected for  
the purpose of ending you

With the sinners but  
the trivial sin

like in New York how  
everyone thinks they're

close for a minute  
laying out in the dream world

Freddy pulling together  
in the junkyard but

we could give a fuck

faith no more an analog  
only if you remember

the summer willingly  
spent on the floor

mental image of a model  
of a plaster arch

you can't carry out  
of the motherlands

inching out of the shoebox

are you whimpering or is it  
just the shared experience

you say my ankles only turn  
like this if I want you

I can go on like this forever  
if this is the right way

to be nonchalant in my body

I think about  
the value of my mouth

and its parts  
and I ask you your preference

the row of cells we'd  
underline no matter what

a podcast in an airplane  
that's feeling the shakes in

the Rockies and finally

getting it that there's  
nothing left to pray to

What I promise at  
the bottom of this hill

is more daylight  
I'm trying to remember

the name of the color  
of our hotel because

it's glowing  
If I remember nothing

generally then it's okay  
to drill down on it

as in brown truck blasted tree

the most delicate seed pods  
next to the manmade lake

picking your home on  
the category

of blaze it'd take you through

If you want to get into this car  
you need to take off your shirt

Peter Bogart Johnson (<http://butterlamb.tumblr.com/tagged/HUABOY>) is a poet living in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. He wrote a chapbook, *Humble under a book of you*, out from Butterlamb Press, and his work can be read in recent issues of *Atlas Review*, *Lungfull*, *Sixth Finch*, *So and So*, and *The Recluse*, among others.

## Love is a Virago, Rimbaud

Love is a virago, Rimbaud,  
a runaway train with a mind of  
its own, it speeds past my stop,  
takes me where I didn't want to go,  
when the temperature goes up  
it melts away like the angels  
I used to make in the snow.  
My love is too often imagined,  
absurd, absent like a stunt man beside  
me in bed with a boner as big as  
a slide trombone,  
love is my addiction,  
my sustaining affliction,  
a storm of pleasure and pain,  
that makes me understand, Rimbaud,  
why you spent all your time hanging out  
with Verlaine.

My love is radiant,  
like in radiation poisoning,  
rosy and rash like the measles,  
multi-colored like a hallucinating kaleidoscope,  
sticky, gummy, held together by tricky goo,  
Rimbaud, like the opium you and Verlaine  
smoked with your friend De Quincy,  
no matter how hard you pinch me,  
the dream of love is one  
from which I don't ever want to wake up,  
even if Love is a virago, Rimbaud,  
a buttercup filled with fool's gold,  
it's still dope, Rimbaud, it's still dope.

## New Year

Last night the park across the street was filled  
with revelers in glittering hats, after the countdown  
from ten came the blowing of horns,  
the boats on the river a chorus of tubas,  
amidst raucous cheers the New Year was born.

This morning the park is deserted except for Walt Whitman  
making angels in the snow, a lone man stands in front  
of my building smoking a cigarette, the ghost of past regrets  
or a tourist waiting for a taxi?

What I want and I want it for everyone, is the chance to keep  
going under full sail towards the unknown,  
I open my window, put my head out, inhale ancient ferries,  
the salt air feels good on the bones.

## A Bird Singing In My Bathroom

There's a bird singing in my bathroom this morning,  
I can hear it through the closed door,  
there's a bird in my bathroom,  
singing its heart out,  
it must have flown in the open window  
to escape the rain,  
it's been raining for days,  
a false June so far,  
more like a cold April,  
nothing but dark skies,  
as if the sun is afraid of something  
but today, there is a bird singing in my bathroom,  
a song as full of light as Sebastian's blue eyes,  
a song as warm as the Caribbean,  
as grand as the waves on the Sea of Japan,  
a song to drive away the demons of the night,  
a song louder than the rain,  
a song strong enough to end all wars,  
a song that cuts through  
my terrors, my pain,  
there's a bird singing in my bathroom,  
singing a rhapsody,  
there's a bird singing a rhapsody to somebody  
and that somebody is me.

## Tsaurah Litzky



## From My Kitchen

From my kitchen I saw the sun set,  
a great orange bubble  
that fell slowly into the sea  
behind the Statue of Liberty,  
much later I saw the full moon  
hang outside the window,  
casting a yellow glow  
into my room, turning it to gold.

Such riches, even briefly, happiness,  
despite the aching heart of the world,  
the abominations, the cruelty,  
there is still enough beauty to make this poem.

## Lost Hippy Yoga

I don't believe in the yoga of themes or theme parks  
I believe in the yoga of wet dreams and illuminating the dark.

I don't believe in constipation or pay-as-you-go romance.  
I keep prunes in the cupboard and smiles in my underpants,  
I believe in buttering both sides of my bread,  
I believe in honoring my dead,

I don't believe anyone who says they give good head.

I wish I could float like a butterfly and sting like a bee  
instead of sinking like a stone and singing off key,  
I will always believe in Willie Nelson and Muhammad Ali

Timing is everything the rutting bull said,  
Yoga says that, so does Buddha in different ways,  
I searched for Buddha on Facebook but I couldn't find his page,  
My Yoga makes me want to be a Zen whore not a kitchen slave,  
I want to be a mermaid in my old age,

I believe in the rainbow colors, I won't wear gray or beige,  
I believe in the pursuit of excellence, extended foreplay,  
perfume in my cleavage and bottomless champagne.

## The Angels Surprised Me /

*(inspired by Najwan Darwish's poem Paradise)*

I woke this morning in Paradise  
and the angels surprised me  
with their mirrors and toothpicks,  
"You lazy bitch, your breath reeks of garlic  
and cheap tricks, your poems are filled with  
clichés, you've lost your magic."

"Servants of God, have mercy on me," I said.  
"I longed to be young again for one more night,  
one more night in a bed of pleasure,  
but my dreams brought me here instead."

## Listening to Telemann's Don Quixote Suite

The music pushes me on to the windmill  
as soon as the hornpipes start,  
nothing like having a clear objective  
to make a crusader out of the heart.

Tsaurah Litzky (<http://urbgraffiti.com/review/flasher-memoir-tsaurah-litzky-review-mark-mccawley/>) is a widely published Pushcart Prize-nominated poet who also writes fiction, nonfiction, erotica, and commentary. She believes it is a privilege to be a poet and that Brooklyn is as close as she will ever get to the promised land.

## Lara Lorenzo



### Horror Vacui

Godlier than dreams of a less shitty Amerika is the part of you that knows better, says cut the crap & moves on – dreaming instead of ox-carts trailing rainbows through snow-covered cities, romance without terror, friendship without betrayal, truth without trauma, & parrots pulling bundles of rainbows up, up through gold clouds & sapphire skies. Godlier than the known flow is the part of you that says fuck it & feels your own flow, your own glow rising in your center like a moon till the power of its power overcomes you & without even meaning to you open up your mouth & say wow. Curses blown out farther than you can see. I mean, blown up & thrown down. Down into the part of you, into the heart of you where rage gathers into music as though your hatred were a scepter or a psalter, the soft skeleton the jelly bones hardening into something useful, a farm implement or a bough bending to release its leaves into a mortar to be ground into a medicine to treat the listlessness of everyone you know, everyone they know, & everyone they know & don't know, which is everyone.

An understandable lethargy within the structural stillness: like how you feel when you forget your own story because someone who knows nothing tells it to you, or you get depressed after asking a good question like whose streets because the answer turns out to be different from the one you were waiting for – not our streets but theirs – or else you realize that the streets are only nominally or provisionally ours, or you look around & see that this “we” that took the streets actually isn't worth being a part of, not really, or maybe it is, it's hard to know what's worth being a part of, what's worth fighting for what's worth dying for or even getting out of bed for. Concealment of complete disgust as liturgy.

I would like to spend all my time working out & thinking critically about structures, growing my bodymind into a movable mountain with which to crush enemies of the people, only I literally cannot. So instead I have visions, like this morning when I dreamed of feeding fruit snacks to a llama while many beings of all genders, shapes, colors & proclivities made joyful & consensual love aboard a steamboat circling the moon, or last week when a turquoise lion streaked with silver resembling the Bosphorus appeared to me in sleep. I know my dreams don't help anyone, but anyway, what matter where the individual mind goes, whether you identify as an anarchist, left communist, or anti-colonial feminist, whether you've learned about liberation psychology or how the variegated fucking-over of Red, Black, & Brown people & so-called women has been necessary for capital accumulation & the bullshit ascendancy of White so-called men. What matter to the wretched of the earth whether you study Fanon or Bhabha, boycott Sodastream or Sabra, go vegan, donate to a friend's Indiegogo, attend a so-called radical conference, or manage to work the phrase “social death” into a poem that later gets published in *The Portable Boog Reader*. The only thing that matters is revolutionary action & the total destruction of violent systems, which seems impossible for the moment. For example, I personally would like to destroy prisons & abolish men, only I literally cannot. I know my limitations, where I come from & what I am.

Know & I don't know. Like, which of my limitations are structural or biological & which are imagined or self-imposed, where is my agency & what is wisdom, where do I get some & what am I ready to sacrifice for the people, what am I ready to give & give up for queer Black indigenous Yellow & Brown disabled trans feminist fat mad & children's liberation when the time comes. I don't know but I'm ready, or starting to get ready, trying to learn what it would mean to get ready, getting up getting out getting over & getting ready, the people are getting up getting over & getting ready, getting ready by the hundreds of thousands & me too.

The future is anti-colonial, gay, & cuddly, a gathering of god-minds in the streets, on the internet or over Egg McMuffins & Dunkaccinos, it doesn't matter about the Egg McMuffins & Dunkaccinos, the future I mean the near future is anti-corporate but it isn't pure because nobody on earth is because we don't know how to be or want to, hurting people who hurt people who hurt people who hurt people or else setting aside the highest parts of ourselves for the sake of security or ineffectual alliances we don't honestly believe in – & infinitely distractable, like who cares what Donald Trump says about Rosie O'Donnell, I mean he's repugnant & I care a lot about queer women, even filthy rich White liberal power dykes, at least abstractly, but aren't they both against everything that's ever made you feel alive, where's that higher love you've been dreaming of, are you still dreaming of it are you dreaming of revolutionary violence or phosphorescence, blue canyons, truth without trauma, what are you dreaming about are you dreaming.

Lara Lorenzo (<https://instagram.com/maketotaldestroyyou/>) is a poet and human services worker living in Gowanus, Brooklyn. Her writing has appeared in *Asphodel*; *Nepantla*; *No, Dear*; *The Poetry Project Newsletter*; and *Toe Good Poetry*, among other places.



as worst behavior and revenge  
blasting out of earbuds

you stand on the front lawn grind slow  
to Tuesday on a Friday. i want to put  
my hands on your hips as you twerk  
in the drizzle. you sway on the train.  
you write a poem with your clit. you've  
been listening to The Beauty Behind the  
Madness on repeat for two weeks. i'm  
beside you and you're beside yourself.  
you're feeling yourself. you go zero to  
a hundred real quick. you bite your lip,  
the forever soft wet part no one can see.  
does it embarrass you to touch yourself?  
i feel that rolling renegade vein in your  
left arm, the radius nestled in the fat.  
your skin is soft like quicksand. your first  
orgasm is a tar pit. your sixth is  
. you are a sensational daydream,  
interrupted wet dream. your second toe  
is longer than your first toe. on both feet  
no one can touch your sensuality. you  
da daddy of everything. white boys use  
words like coward and homewrecker. they  
fear your explosive blackness. they dream  
in fevered frantic phrenology. the sacred  
within you demands their blood. white girls  
use words like threatening and remind you  
what good friends they've been to you.  
they assume the skin you inhabit is about  
them. they think you'll fuck them while  
their boyfriend's at work. you fuckless.  
you reckless. you shameless. you da one.  
you da real me. too stubborn to submit,  
flooding basements but i know how you  
like it and i'm the only one who knows  
how you like it.

as silk thread and grief sewn into skin

\\you sweat in your sleep--  
\\you are devilish egg yolk yellow to me--  
//i cannot touch your blood without feeling your beartrapped fear--  
//i cannot touch your hair without feeling your sheepskin anxiety--  
  
//i cannot touch your skin without feeling your salamander ambiguity--  
-  
your blackness is existential--  
are you even a mammal--  
\\you and all the climbing vines keep fucking your way to the top--  
  
if i cut you--  
what is the temperature of the blood in your left atrium--  
//i make you a debtor to keep your genius in check--  
the world is a massive void to you--  
  
\\you can't taste your food--  
only the salt of your sweat--  
tears as they float from behind your lashes--  
one night you dream about saving the world--  
  
\\you wake up before you know how it ends.

## Sade Murphy



as watercolor and endearment  
on tissue paper

smoking the Marlboro skyline you are Dylan's  
Ophelia your hair tumbling down the fire escape  
twisted tortured little girl laughing at me teach  
me light of my life talking in your sleep floating  
down river to Corot's lake on your back ecstatic  
in a Turner double & nothing the look on  
your face frozen marble or bronze painted  
crimson patterned clover stigmata to the saint  
madam of butterfly bedlam a rose arranging  
its petals in the synthetic breeze of subway  
tunnels mouthing Hail Marys as an amulet your  
throbbing heels never callus in thimbleberry  
slip-ons I worship you broken cookie cutter  
cow homemade Mexican chocolate smeared  
on book pages can you make it darling stop  
here if you have become estranged your calves  
the swell of your back the nerve of your neck  
catastrophic orisons coshered & untouched you  
smiling aphoric in the mirror I want to torrefy  
your baby fat crispy gristle bare you a terrifying  
swan to kiss you with your own lips in between  
bites of mushroom & sirocco

as clay and transcendence under fingernails

all over the map  
your handwriting is one  
man's freedom fighter one man's  
terrorist you are one dirty blonde  
away from a cobalt blue temper light  
weight soul solid cord noosed about  
  
my  
ankles the constant dissolves you  
could I find you  
avocado number  
ebony cabernet  
rolly polly brat worst  
  
everlasting you are too  
powerful Africanized high  
priestess ink blot honey bee  
driving drunk on a vast dream  
  
kept at bay with  
the calamari consistency of  
your nightmares lick you  
with unsavory taste buds  
steal what you need  
keep hunger frozen  
  
read like a sonnet on the mind  
of a nuclear physicist you changed my  
mood I just only noticed you  
hear its heart  
pulsate underneath reborn  
from ribcages and crema rossa  
  
anew

as sidewalk chalk and sedition smeared on a brick road

I am memorizing the composition of you. Left iris around an undilated pupil. It reminds me of a starburts-carred tree ring. How black coffee is not really black. When you stand in the mirror the first fortyfive seconds are harsh scrutiny. you don't have to be a hairless Normcore twat. you are already a highly invisible target. your heart has somatic nerves. you lose Seoul, Salto, Stockholm. you bleed with the moon, commune with the inscrutable. Under the influence I allow you to rise to the surface of my twowayglassskin. you become my last will and testament. Everyone else is just a witness.

from "self portrait"

Sade Murphy (<http://realpants.com/author/sade-murphy/>) is the author of *Dream Machine* (co-im-press), and a columnist at Real Pants (Lonely Britches and What's the Tea). They live in Bed-Stuy and attend the Pratt Institute, edit chapbooks for Horseless Press, and co-curate a reading series held at Pete's Candy Store.

## Heather Again

In all of my dreams forever  
Heather upchucks and upchucks for good.  
Dear diary, Heather touches the base of my throat.  
Adventuresome. Neat. Her felt

blazer shimmies up. Skinny horny

buckling bowing crumbing away.

Come on Heather, it'll be very.

Teach me real life. Sucking.

My nostalgia is a score for pony show, for murder.  
Seconds? Help yourself.

My sex is a gun filled with blanks. An erection.  
Lick it up baby,  
with blanks.

And I'm only a Junior.

Heatherbendover.

## Heather for Once

Lousy little croquet match.  
Itches my soul bored soul.  
The terrible cough accuses HACK HACK.  
Heather your chainsaw clouds out  
the schoolteacher's lovely rule.

Your blue mouth is brash. So as to say, I am over it.

Heather you won't ever  
learn to fly.  
Heather your luck  
runs out at the end of Act I.

Hack. Scratch. Your electric  
blue teeth look over to my electric blue legs.  
The glass table buries whatever junk shit I happen  
to be stuffed with.

Lick it up baby, lick it up.  
Veronica's stump head

riles me up. No words too sacred nor profane.

Heather surrender  
your own dull knife life.  
Fuck me gently no chain-

saws in sight.

Hand me a motherfucking scrunchie at the end of life.

## Finally Heather

Teach me speech with your fly. Puke demands

a back-alley transaction. A bomb to the chest

finally. So as to say, que sera.

So every Heather crowns

me mogul of loss. Bullshit. Fingers demand  
nights. Veronica doesn't weep. Smokes cigarettes.  
Talks of all the bloody ash on her mouth.

Delicious.

## Molly Rose Quinn



## She Generally Gave Herself Very Good Advice

She is my looking-glass I scapegoat her constantly.  
We subsist in a parking lot dinner party,  
soy sauce that dribbles down my elbow  
and a soda to suck on. In the Story  
of the Vivian Girls all these version of myself  
earned their Carry License thoughtfully,  
pitched terms against terms, rolled their eyes  
to reveal they were not versions but others entirely,  
rebelled, then left. I like to think of myself  
as a maker of wasterscapes and as though  
I were willowy and always en route  
to a summer blockbuster. She had a muter  
that she kept in her dress pockets,  
says: look at not to. When she loses  
her v card (nineteen) it's enforced I call her  
Vivian nor Vivien. Reigning a plush Victorian  
tower LOL'ing as such. At dawn the army  
of adults on boats rattles our buttresses.  
A plastic swing, a DVR. Our discouraging aggressor  
like mid-century asylums or spring break.  
The climax is mellow; kids win and the sun  
is replaced with an arterial line. When our mothers  
are all dead I drive to the airport. When our mothers  
die for a second time I will book my flight back. When  
the pube wedding finally comes I'll lose all the weight.

## Atmospheric

It's this nude room a child pounding herself  
into the floor which is sort of a filthy pouring of herself.  
My sick friend peed in her bed, showed me it.  
In my wildest dream, I briskly gather the cords  
at her collarbone, yank them like reigns.  
Didn't stop her going. The little trickle of catheter.  
Good thing my life was saved by a Christian boy  
with uncut hair. His scalp eventually  
did him in. Head whipping to the beats  
of a sled for the dead. Then in the future,  
I still consider myself a child,  
consider my narrow chest. Boyishness badly lewd  
on the sills, fugitive shards in my head.  
Outside of a window but the edge of the window  
is broken glass, cocaine painting the back of his wrist.  
My very last night in Tennessee I'm splayed on the roof,  
there he is over me, there is a pinprick, then a crust,  
then nothing. He says, why are all these guns hanging in the air  
like christmas ornaments. The golden retrievers  
pawing at the ground, the grass watery and crude.  
Mom sleuthing about, fingering the cut edge of a Bud can.

## Home Idea

Stop being unwatchable recruit the gargoyles  
To vigil her through til death starts the center

Of a town can be a dying lady whose illness  
Does not stop for you does no tree off your head

On a night scene his backseat you retreat to exterior  
In adulthood does anyone eat lunch on an ailing

Opossum the way you keep yourself the idea of home  
The turkey of the stomach a house of marble living

Where there are no weary fortresses only dragonfly  
Penises teens with horns fly scream berry listen

Through a closed door your cussing heart popping  
When that dying lady died this place a dark egg

Holding nothing only squawking approach  
A church behemoth stilettos the roast of god

Was the funeral of a woman who chose to love you so  
Everyone fell down on their knees at the sight of you

Rose like christ like a jealous consecration the idea  
Is a goat in the heart that kicks til it's wanted

## At the Spoke Gallery or My Other Art

# 59 looks like the space I scaled  
in my dream once, before  
leaving wings consolidated  
under rafters and senses.

Someone seems to have tilted  
it sideways, almost, someone  
who is probably familiar with  
my lack of vertical prowess

these days. It's not that I'm  
not eager to try. It's  
just that teaching is tough  
and the days much longer  
and everything feels cornered  
in. That's ok, though. Makes  
for cool angles.

## Bowling On Long Island *for keith and jen*

Inside the frames,  
inside the rise, innings  
spin, rise, into  
the inside. The spin, the gray.  
The spin, the gray, the rise.  
Inside the spin, innings  
inside the fine spin,  
rise, frame the rise,  
rise inside the frame.  
Inside the frames rises  
fine. Inside the frames:  
innings spinning into  
gray finer rises into  
finally outside.

## Some Light

"two bodies wrapped in darkness / among  
millions of other bodies / wrapped in  
darkness" - Anselm Hollo

The truest thing a man can know  
is his own heart in a room of darkness  
is the line you wanted to write  
after the storm, but you paused instead

to reflect on all the words that weren't said  
and the ones that surged that night of wax,  
four flights up and suspended above a city  
divided by its new relationship to light.

And now the carnival rides of your youth,  
the ones you've been on and the ones  
you've only heard about, are washed away  
like the memory of your uncle's oldsmobile

is washed away or your friend's home  
near the shore, the one you'd escape to  
in imagined other lives, is washed away.  
And now silhouettes of lovers still retreat

to corners of a quiet room save for one  
audible sliver of some light you refuse  
to blow out for fear of a biblical cold  
that rhymes with the dare of being alone.

There are bodies in that darkness.  
There will always be bodies wrapped in dark,  
but there are also new understandings  
of light because of which we emerge

from this and every other prolonged night  
both stricken and awakened by the chill  
of the things we can say in deep and sudden  
terror and then never again in the subside.

# Alan Semerdjian



## The Rock Star

When I was young and full of stars,  
the melodies were still like trees  
and the maple was tall, so tall.

Those days, I never wanted my father  
to ever pick me up, never wanted  
jazz, Armenian hymnals, or Bach.

All the world was in the stereo,  
and the stereo was loud, so loud.  
And there was my finger, *there, there,*

and that was the best part. *And there,*  
*that part,* the best part, meant  
that I would like to kiss you.

But I never did, not the way I should've  
when I was young and full of stars  
and the stereo was loud, so loud.

## On Long Island

On Long Island - I'd like to say anywhere, but specifically  
Long Island - when the husk of night is finally peeled  
and morning begins to take over the world  
and you're finally awake for this, for the last time  
you may stay up so late / for the first time in years,

you're in the car driving, and the roads move in and out  
of thoughts, of something that may have just happened  
or may have been repeated, and that comes to you  
like the caws wear their hearthbeards moving  
through the nudity of finally fall again,

and your favorite season is in the many ways  
the trees turn the color of guitars, and a phrase hums  
the significance of lightning in a cavity in a memory  
(you're all memory and no image but the sun  
as prehistoric again), and the wind becomes the slip

of a dress that keeps losing itself and reappearing  
through the cracks of the window and your temple  
to the tips of your fingers; this is when, finally  
in Long Island, you begin to draw maps with empty  
lanes headed straight for the coasts of your weather.

## How So Tight, Spider?

*after Whitman*

How so tight, spider?  
Spider, so tight?  
How the cobwebs  
so tight spider?  
From the mind spider?  
Spider, from the mind?

From one surface  
to another, spider,  
the lines so tight.  
So tender, so light.  
The lines, spider,  
how so tight?

Always reaching,  
always making, spider.  
How so always?  
How so making?  
The web, spider, the line?  
How far reaching,  
how far, the mind?

## Poem

I burned myself  
 I folded my tent and retreated  
 I was some kind of hunter  
 striding through the forest with my straw carryall  
 trees fell people staggered  
 I appeared in wide angle

It would be smart to join the others  
 I was drawn from the same pile  
 but I don't mingle or kiss for long  
 I tighten my muzzle  
 I am menacing I reason wildly  
 I don't identify with change  
 I have no gleam of affection for consequences

## People

I'm not on the train  
 They still need proof  
 I must turn things around  
 And would if it weren't for these metal legs  
 Who will pick up my mail  
 And carry me across the island?  
 People are incomprehensible  
 Elsewhere on the globe (I mean glob)  
 The Grand Hotel opens its doors  
 On television

Walking is dangerous  
 I shove off at dawn to the other end of the apartment  
 Where the plaids and florals mingle  
 Then back again  
 As the sun smacks the floor  
 I'm wearing stripes

## Ann Stephenson



## My Foot

The little blue marks my shoes left behind in the gallery  
 my broken foot  
 it's okay, it hurts  
 the weather they show in pictures  
 the weather that's actually happening  
 all these things so I turn to the cat  
 cat upright in a chair  
 hissing while I fold laundry  
 I drink smoothies  
 a stabbing pain when I breathe  
 then it's nothing  
 move on  
 foot exercises, breathing exercises, floor exercises  
 put ice on it put heat on it don't walk on it  
 a new pillbox  
 the broken buzzer  
 7 a.m. glow in the street  
 a dollhouse arrangement  
 differences between the things I get  
 and things I get into  
 looking for me  
 soon I'll lay my head on this wood block  
 and say goodnight wood block

## I Slept Alone Last Night

I liked it  
 but I was glad when Lori returned in the morning  
 glad to have the cat too  
 my associate will be right with you  
 I said to an empty chair  
 then settled down to tea  
 which expired long ago  
 that's too long  
 not so long  
 surely I can define my own tone  
 I pick a movie  
 my view of the lobby and the people  
 I know my limits  
 I know my lemons  
 they pounce on my gut  
 no response  
 so I let this parody suffice  
 I told you so, dear ulcer  
 we're in this together  
 though it's awfully late in the day

## Little Isthmus

Mind your manners for exercise  
 on this island  
 the originals have painted their signs  
 their stories are in the trees  
 rules are overruled  
 leaders from the far shore  
 have run aground with their differences

Wait I'm not there anymore  
 I'm parked under a tenement window  
 I've issued myself a stay  
 but I'm charging from a rented socket  
 and my means are dwindling  
 soon I'll set up housekeeping in a ditch  
 I love how the difference is made up  
 it opens onto a river  
 that opens onto an ocean

Ann Stephenson's (<http://www.poetryproject.org/articles/ann-stephenson/>) chapbooks include *Adventure Club* (Insurance Editions) and *Wirework* (Tent Editions). Her poems have appeared in *Sal Mimeo*, *Shifter*, *The Brooklyn Rail*, *The Recluse*, and elsewhere. She was born and raised in Georgia and lives in The East Village.

## early contemporary, late modern

We did it in the front seat of the car.  
 We did it in the back seat of the car.  
 We did it at the movies.  
 I couldn't even pronounce her nom de plume, but  
 Made an alphabet soup in my jeans  
 Just the same—a tribute to fanciful names.

In truth, it's like we'd little better to do  
 Than dissemble these corpses every day after school.  
 Observation impedes function—  
 Does anyone care to remember that?  
 We clone to conquer & thus infuse  
 Emotions newly owned—tiny eggs, guilt bones.

Cold air means cold fortune.  
 Behind becomes before.  
 Did you ever wake up to discover  
 It was several days earlier than you thought it was?  
 Then the telephone rings; the matrix  
 Of narrative clichés repeats a ludicrous claim:

"I love you. I really do. I love the work."  
 And I love all that nepotism in you,  
 Every last wry-mouthed word  
 Demanding more. It is, by far, only more we seek.  
 I love the posterior-garde tone  
 Of your double-turned cheek.

Can I flatter you sometime?  
 Can I talk to you? Can I?  
 My back aches, my wrists ache.  
 My faked expression aches.  
 Iambic pentameter gives me the creeps.  
 Please critique me, good new friend!

I've lost my head over you, though you  
 Don't need me. My eye is nothing less than yours.  
 My self is but an appendage, engorged.  
 I've ripped off my hands in a jealous play;  
 Why doesn't anybody attend me?  
 There's no valid entity to attend; that's why.

## at the hummingbird hotel

A celebration of blackbirds escape the bayou inside,  
 As the brackish marsh imposes another power of perspective;

Reveler's poise on a pinhead in frenzy, but  
 The dissolution of that steel tip tricks their footing;

These images owe their value to indeterminate,  
 Insecure positions in the fight to fix a feeling to a clock.

If it is true a sublime solitude resonates like slow rain  
 On the wide sea's surface, and that this isolating graze

Of the vast blue-blushed and swollen cheek  
 Is a metaphoric but clever nod to supposed perfection,

Why then have we evolved back from such rapturous freedom  
 To the floodlights of this ethereal burlesque,

Where faces change more often than masks in a hoax,  
 And every expression plays parasite to its host?

This night, four gritty hotel floors over St. Charles Ave.,  
 Headlights bar through Venetian blinds and carve

Divisive motives in the white ceiling's noise,  
 And those multiple masks become the same in their name

And accusation. The project of this screening  
 Being what lies between the moment and its meaning.

## Carl Watson



## everywhere I go, I'm the only one there

I went to a party with artists and poets,  
 I was the only one there.  
 I went to a dinner with partners and associates,  
 I was the only one there.  
 I went to see *Hamlet* at Shakespeare in the Park,  
 No audience, no players but me.  
 I went to the A&P to do some grocery shopping,  
 I was the only one in that cold place.  
 I was having a conversation with a friend in a bar,  
 But I was talking to myself  
 In a movie about myself talking to a friend in a bar.  
 There's no need to go on with this explanation, really,  
 You get the point, at least I do, anyway.  
 It's the race to be somebody before all others.

Still, everywhere I go, everything I do,  
 I'm the only one there, doing it.  
 Certainly there are other bodies, other voices,  
 But I'm always alone in perceiving them.  
 Perhaps it is ego, self-centered existence,  
 For sure. But here's the twist:  
 I sometimes feel that I'm not really there at all,  
 As others see right through my supposed presence.  
 Is it me seeing through myself?  
 Or am I their creation, not my own?  
 They need me to make themselves: by using me,  
 Or some facsimile of what they need me to be,  
 They make themselves into what they need.  
 It just goes on and on like that—

A vortex of self, making other, making self.  
 Perhaps we just make each other,  
 And all is what it is and all.  
 That would be the generous theory, utopian, even.  
 But here's another suggestion, I posed to myself:  
 The world is so crowded with others,  
 Wanting me to make them who they want to be,  
 That if I'm the only one there,  
 It's really an act, not just of relief, but revenge,  
 And it makes life more tolerable, for a time.  
 In any case, one day I will attend  
 My own funeral—alone, I assume. Yes,  
 Pretty sure I'll be the only one there for that  
 Except that I won't be, finally.

## force feeding: a darwinian rhapsody

If you stick a tube down a goose's throat  
 Force feed it a chemical concoction of corn  
 You get a larded liver, to grind in a blender  
 With spices, to serve on crackers or toast  
 To the consuming state, for whom you play host.

If you force doctored milk down a penned calf,  
 Immobilized so as not to overwork the muscle,  
 Forbidding it to wander, mature or mate,  
 You get that soft bloodless meat, highly prized  
 At the banquet table of the capital feast.

If you fill a man's veins with hormones & heroin,  
 Just keep pumping it in, despite any illusion  
 Of ecstasy or satiety your victim might enjoy,  
 You get a hollowed man, who, if his head is not  
 Emptied or confused, his frame of reference will rot.

If you pump toxic elixirs under the Gaian crust,  
 Fracturing it for the pleasures of commerce,  
 The devices that will be powered by the extract  
 May well speak to their future slaves: "Its alright.  
 This world was made to appease your appetite."

It seems profitable to force one's will  
 Against the structure of Paradise,  
 For pate or veal, fuel or glory or other trophy,  
 The unseen bargain bars the desired result.  
 The parasite atrophies with its host,

As does the child within the womb  
 Of the material world it wounds.

Carl Watson's (<http://www.evergreenreview.com/the-secret-door-carl-watson/>) previously published books include *Anarcadium Pan*, *Backwards the Drowned Go Dreaming*, *Beneath the Empire of the Birds*, *Bricolage ex Machina*, and *The Hotel of Irrevocable Acts*. His most recent book is *Astral Botanica*, a collection of poems.

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Issue 105 free

*The Portable Boog Reader 9:  
An Anthology of Cincinnati and  
New York City Poetry*

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editor/publisher

David A. Kirschenbaum  
editor@boogcity.com

art editor

Jeffrey Cyphers Wright  
art@boogcity.com

film editor Joel Schlemowitz  
film@boogcity.com

music editor Jesse Statman  
music@boogcity.com

poetry editor Buck Downs  
poetry@boogcity.com

printed matter editor  
Mark Gurarie

printedmatter@boogcity.com

small press editor

Joe Pan

smallpress@boogcity.com

counsel Ian S. Wilder

counsel@boogcity.com

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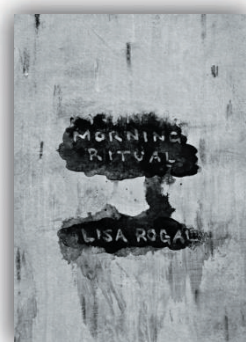
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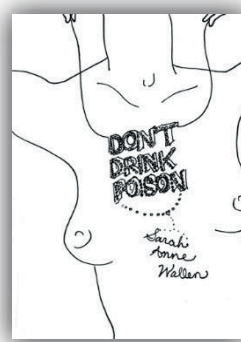
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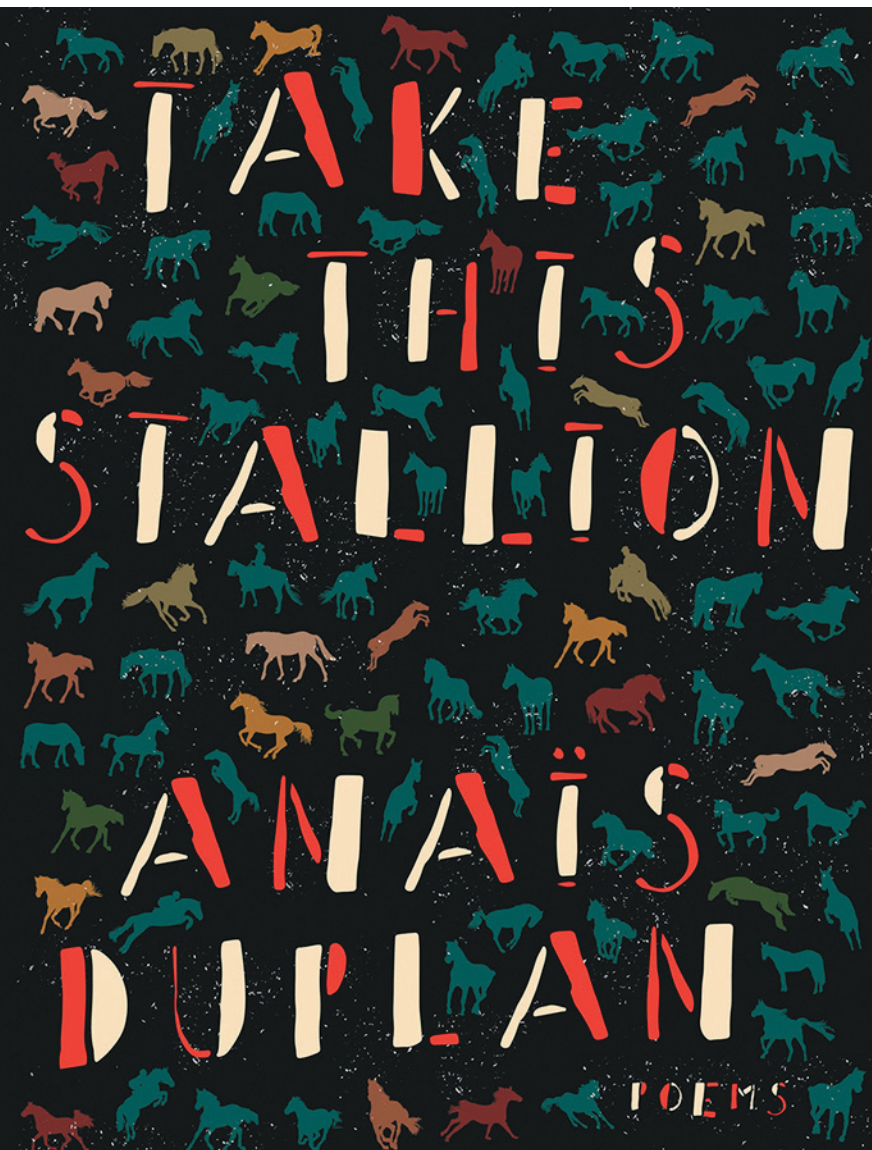


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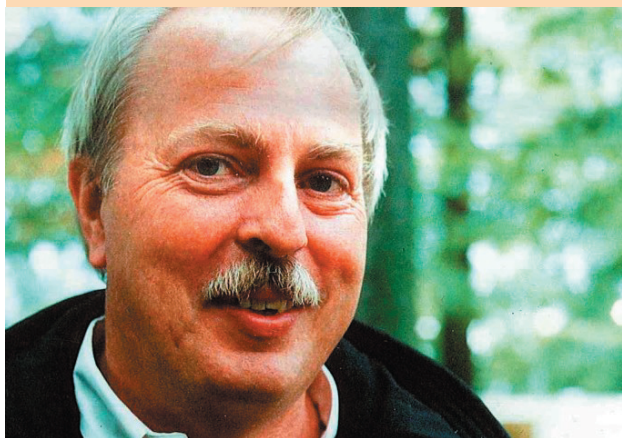
# Legendary Epics, Yarns and Fables: Stephen Gebhardt, 1937-2015



BY JOEL SCHLEMOWITZ

Cincinnati-based filmmaker Stephen Gebhardt passed away last October. His *New York Times* obituary, authored by film critic William Grimes, focused on Gebhardt's work for Yoko Ono and John Lennon on films such as *Yoko Ono's Fly*, a quasi-documentary film taking its title from the album *Imagine*, as well as his work on the production team of Rollin Binzer's concert film *Ladies and Gentlemen, the Rolling Stones*, and his documentary *Twenty to Life: The Life and Times of John Sinclair*.

Gebhardt's interest and involvement in filmmaking began while studying at the University of Cincinnati, and continued with work for the production company of Robert Fries, who was his collaborator on many of his productions. Gebhardt's eventual involvement with the New York film scene is related by Grimes, "Mr. Gebhardt was directing the University of Cincinnati Film Society in 1970 when Jonas Mekas, a filmmaker whose work the society had featured, asked him to come to New York and manage Anthology Film Archives, his new center devoted to avant-garde cinema." He accepted, leading to his work with Ono and Lennon.



**While still in Cincinnati Gebhardt had been prolifically producing short films, including a series of filmmaker portraits.**

Courtesy Art Academy of Cincinnati

But while still in Cincinnati Gebhardt had been prolifically producing short films, including a series of filmmaker portraits under the rubric of *Legendary Epics, Yarns and Fables*. These are interviews, ostensibly devoid of questions (a rule that is broken with the off-screen voice of Gebhardt asking experimental filmmaker Robert Nelson about some of the responses to his work), captured in uninterrupted long takes, the camera pointed frontally upon the subject, zooming slowly in and out at times, leaving the interviewee to decide how to fill the time. The subjects of the four films consist of Robert Nelson, Stan Brakhage, Peter Kubelka, and a two-person portrait of George and Mike Kuchar. The films individually range from five to 11 minutes. Correspondence Gebhardt sent to the Film-Makers' Cooperative in 1970 reveals that there was to have been a fifth entry in the series, with Jonas Mekas before the camera, its potential running time described as "God knows how long," in a mercurial jibe at loquaciousness of the prospective subject.

*Legendary Epics, Yarns and Fables* might underwhelm the viewer seeking some thundering moment of insight from the interviewees, but the diverse ways in which the time is passed by each of the subjects does convey something of the idiosyncratic personalities, Brakhage offering a verbal dissection of the present moment of filming: "Things are intruding, like that thunk that was the radiator. I feel like I'll save this thing from having classical music or something slapped over it if I refer to the fact that the camera can be heard running, very distantly fluttering in the distance. Not quite like looking in a mirror because I can't see myself, but I have the sense that there is something in there that can see myself despite the fact that I know that what's really happening is that light is bouncing off of me, studio-type or professional-type lighting equipment is bouncing off me and being reflected by my skin surface and and suit surface and whatever's around me, down to the tunnel of that lens, changing the chemicals on a strip of celluloid, passing through that camera. . ."

Or Kubelka taking the reins and directing Gebhardt from in front of the camera, demanding he zoom in for a close-up shot, and then go wide to frame him head to foot. The Kuchars discuss the subjects of losing and gaining weight, tooth decay, the pleasurable-yet gas producing-meals of the Kuchar's mother who cooked everything in tomato sauce, childhood fears of cockroaches and being struck by lightning, the indignity of suicide by bicycle accident, the void of outer space, ending with the observation from George, "What it depressing? It was depressing," as sound trails on after the image has faded to black. Gebhardt's *Cincinnati Answer Print*, consisting of Robert Nelson speaking about his films directly to the camera, could very well be considered as part of the series. Nelson stands framed by a bay window in the background, white Ionic columns framing him as if on a theater stage. The film is comprised of two long, continuous takes, and the curious aspect of this work is the repeated anecdotes and phrases between the two monologues, suggesting the action of a filmmaker speaking about his or her work as an act of performance, rehearsed and repeated in multiple takes.

Other short films include the document of a Cincinnati street performer doing Native American dances in extravagant feathered outfit. A note of visual dissonance takes the form of the dark sunglasses he wears in addition to the feathered regalia. Gebhardt also captures the blood-soaked scene of a Hermann Nitsch performance at the University of Cincinnati in another short film. The filmmaker's young daughter appears in two works taking the approach of the *Legendary Epics, Yarns and Fables*, with long-take monologues before the camera.

The longest of the short works is *Bluegrass At Beanblossom*, a 25-minute film described by Gebhardt as a "personal document" of the old-time music festival at Bill Monroe's farm in Beanblossom, Ind. The film presents its subject matter in a plain-spoken style, the camera observing the performers either playing in casual groups in the parking lot, in the woods around the farm, or on stage during the festival. The film does little to intercede on our experience of the music itself, save for a few cutaway shots of the faces of children and elderly folks within the crowd of attendees.

While Gebhardt's films mostly inhabit the documentary realm, a short entitled *Headache* stands apart from the others. "Mechanized stimuli attack the senses juxtaposed against the lyrical, humanistic forms of the city," is how Gebhardt describes the 10-minute work. A soundtrack of layered clanking, hammering, and radio interference accompanies images driving across a corridor-like steel girder bridge, its dull red paint contrasted with the blue, cloudless sky, details of the urban environs, traffic lights and passers-by on the sidewalk, children at play, lead to scenes by the river as a young man fishes from a cement pier. It ends with a night scene shot from a prospect above the city, the scene splintering into multiple exposure of the distant lights, with frenetic camera movement and rapid cuts.

Joel Schlemowitz (<http://www.joelschlemowitz.com>) is a Park Slope, Brooklyn-based filmmaker who makes short cine-poems and experimental documentaries. His most recent project, "78rpm," is in the final stages of post-production. He has taught filmmaking at The New School for the past 19 years. Schlemowitz photo by Robyn Hasty.



**16mm films of Stephen Gebhardt at the Film-Makers' Cooperative.** Joel Schlemowitz photo

# Nancy Paraskevopoulos' Comfort Muffin at the End of the Universe



BY JESSE STATMAN

*Comfort Muffin*, Cincinnati native Nancy Paraskevopoulos' debut release, is, true to its title, the sweetest, most comforting ode to the horrors and banalities of everyday existence I've heard all year. Despite being released in 2014, complete with an album cover designed by Paul Coors depicting Paraskevopoulos' name in bright lights, on a giant billboard overlooking a magnificent Ohio sunset, oddly reminiscent of *The Simpsons*, it took me over a year to discover *Comfort Muffin*, which is saddening. If you've heard the album, you'll understand why. If you haven't, you will soon.

Many songs on the album are painfully blunt, reporting on anything from heartbreak ("My Mixtape"), to the intertwined rabbit holes of various environmental problems and their causes ("Restaurant at the End of the Universe"), with spirited, humorous delivery. Armed with a ukulele and a versatile voice, frequently oscillating between haunting, melodic vocalizations and expressive, often sardonic talk-singing, Nancy Paraskevopoulos plays heartfelt, poetic love songs and poignant breakup songs, jam-packed with sparks and outbursts of spontaneity and imagination, and often interspersed with inspiring sociopolitical commentary. Paraskevopoulos' songs stand out in an era endlessly oversaturated with recycled, heartless, unimaginative love songs, and she stays grounded, humble, and real throughout whatever zany, interdimensional adventures she takes us on. In "My Mixtape," Paraskevopoulos attributes her accomplishment of this feat to her actually being a giraffe:

"I am a giraffe; my head is in the air, but my feet are on, my feet are on, my feet are on the ground."

It goes without saying that Nancy Paraskevopoulos is a human being, and not a giraffe, or an Iggy Pop cover band. Despite this, there's a brilliant cover of Pop's "I Wanna Be Your Dog" toward the end of *Comfort Muffin*, reinventing the sadomasochistic proto-punk anthem in a far more tender, romantic light, without sacrificing the power or momentum of the original. Other highlights include a brave, subtly anti-homophobic love ballad called "Let 'em Stare," and a hidden track where Paraskevopoulos raps about how she learned to spell and pronounce her name, while teaching us how to do the same.

**Paraskevopoulos' songs stand out in an era endlessly oversaturated with recycled, heartless, unimaginative love songs, and she stays grounded, humble, and real throughout whatever zany, interdimensional adventures she takes us on.**

Interestingly, what makes *Comfort Muffin* so comforting and muffin-esque seems to be its brutal honesty. Like most art dabbling in the darker, more melancholic sides of the human condition, the music of Nancy Paraskevopoulos is a modern, personal spin on the ancient feeling of simultaneously being eating alive by the world we live in and watching it destroy itself, but making art, laughing, falling in love, and working eccentric, underpaid jobs, inside of and in spite of it.

Nancy Paraskevopoulos' ukulele wizardry works wonders, without any Tiny Tim-style schtickiness, or virtuosic shredding in the vein of Jake Shimabukuro, or conforming to any of the many conventional notions of what a ukulele player "should," "would," or "could" do; the uke simply complements Paraskevopoulos' songs in ways a guitar wouldn't. The engineering and mixing of *Comfort Muffin*'s many ingredients (all natural, and none containing traces of whales or butterflies, for any concerned environmentalists) also complements her songs, and it was handled by Jerri Queen. The mix was then mastered (baked) by John Hoffman. Sadly, *Comfort Muffin* is no longer available in the form of a muffin (or at least, an edible one), but it's still available as a CD and digital download, from the BandCamp page of Paul Coors's Cincinnati-based CDR label CHOW.

Nancy Paraskevopoulos (<http://chowwww.bandcamp.com/album/comfort-muffin>) is a musician, performer, and Cincinnati native. Paraskevopoulos's full band is called Nancy & the Garbage Party. She likes Newtonian physics, reading, and thinks your dog is great.

Jesse Statman (<http://cannonballstatman.bandcamp.com>) can be found making loud, high-energy acoustic music on stages around the world, and making louder, higher-energy acoustic music on stages around New York City. Statman also writes about his favorite local and extraterrestrial musicians in *Boog City*, and plays drums in a psychedelic glam punk supertrio called *The Dick Jokes*. James Butroid photo.

# Matt Hart's Cincinnati: The Poet on the City He Calls Home



## INTERVIEW BY MARK GURARIE

**W**hen Matt Hart reads his poetry, audiences take notice. A perfect complement to the text, his delivery is fiery and has a sustained energy that builds steadily, sometimes boiling over into incantation-like fervor. As is seen in any of his five collections, including, most recently, *Debauched Debauched* (H\_NGM\_N Books) and *Sermons and Lectures Both Blank and Relentless* (Typecast Publishing), this is a voice that crackles with urgency, that burns for all of us. It might be reductive to call him a “punk rock Whitman” or something like that, but there is something sprawling and democratic in his approach to verse. It might bring O’Hara or Byron or Emily Dickinson to the house show, it might declare “dis-allegiance” or it might state: “I believe in the mess and I adore the way it rushes.” Here is the poet as both champion of the craft; as caretaker of the writing that has gotten us here, stoking the flames; as witness to the world in all of its messiness, its ugliness, and its beauty; and finally as a vessel for the chaos of language and thought. To say the least, there seems nothing ironic about any of it; he really, really means it when he says: “Sound the alarm./ This is nothing or it’s all that’s poetic./ since it’s daily, full of the facts as I find them in a pile./ But then I bring them here and make a monster.”

All of which is to say that, as a resident of Cincinnati since the early ‘90s, Matt Hart, has certainly left an indelible imprint on his city. Alongside Eric Appleby, he founded the absolutely vital journal and press, *Forklift, Ohio: A Journal of Poetry, Cooking & Light Industrial Safety*, and, as faculty of the Art Academy of Cincinnati, he continues to contribute to the local literary landscape. Before getting his M.F.A. and devoting himself more to teaching and publication, he was (and still occasionally is) singer and guitarist for Indiana-based punk rock band *Squirtgun*, so he is also in touch with the D.I.Y. ethos, the need to build something from nothing, which certainly translates into his fervent desire to keep art in the Queen City vital and vibrant. In this way, he as much as anyone has helped form and shape the literary landscape of Cincinnati. *Boog City* caught up with Hart to talk about the city, how it’s impacted his own work and where he thinks it fits on the cultural map.



**When I moved to Cincinnati in 1993, the city was immediately familiar to me. My familiar. Has it changed over time? Yes, and so have I. It’s not just a place I live. It’s a huge part of my life. Literally the ground beneath me, my house, my family, my poems, my love.**

**One of the most striking features of your own work is that there seems to be an almost brutal honesty and passion that informs the lyrical voice as it grapples with a constellation of cultural artifacts, memories, and observations of human nature in both its constant motion and calm. Certainly, then, you convey a sense of your city in the poetry; for instance, at one point in *Sermons and Lectures*, the voice seems almost gratefully bewildered by the domesticity that Cincinnati has come to represent, where “Now, somehow it’s fields of wheat/ and lectures on things I can barely understand A house/ in Cincinnati, a walk with my dog Little daughter full of grace/ All the me I want to be.” What role do you think your home plays in your writing? Have your conceptions of it—and the way you write about them—changed over time?**

It’s so weird (and sweet) seeing those lines quoted back at me. It feels like such a long time ago that I wrote those poems, many of them in a nearly trance-like state, so I don’t really even remember writing them. They always look and sound so otherworldly to me. Happily, they do sound like something I would write/have written ... “Little daughter full of grace”—she’s not so little anymore. Tom Waits was right “November seems odd ...” That’s maybe not a non sequitur. I actually think I’m more obsessed with time than space/place. Nevertheless, you’re right that place/home is important too, since a lot of my poems start with note-taking, with reflecting on whatever’s happening around me (or on my desk or in my yard or in my ears) right now. The elm tree won’t stop baffling the jays. Pine sap drips on the hood of my car. Today is garbage day. The trucks and their ruckus. The men in their coveralls talking on their phones, throwing plastic bins around. I’m listening alternately to the radio and Deafheaven. The world with its windows. The imagination with its glow. Something’s coming. I know not what.

Anyway, I think the thing about home for me is that it’s the place I haunt (but I’m not only a ghost. Not yet.)—a place I come back to again and again. It is the measure of stability in my life. At home I am a presence, in contrast to so many other places where I am at least partially an absence even when I’m there—which is to say that away from home I am only and always a version of myself, whereas at home I feel more like who I really am.

Of course, by home there I’m thinking about my house (and being there with my family, Melanie and Agnes, the old gray-headed dog, Daisy). Cincinnati is where we live—where we locate and have located ourselves—and I love it. I’m from Indiana originally, so I’ve never lived (other than for brief periods) anywhere other than the Midwest. There’s balance here, sometimes tenuous and conflicted—every extreme you can imagine—from gun nuts to thespians, from racists to good Samaritans, Tea Partiers to Communists. And while I myself am so left wing I often feel like one of Apollinaire’s more socialist pihis, I like that I’m not constantly surrounded by people who think just like I do. The opportunity to be in the mix, to resist and be resisted, is very very real (more so for some than others, and sometimes unfortunately). This is both stabilizing and destabilizing simultaneously.

Cincinnati, too, is a city on the move, gentrifying rapidly with all the benefits and problems that brings. The Art Academy of Cincinnati, the college of art and design where I teach, is right in the middle of Over-the-Rhine, the heart of the city’s resurgence: Washington Park, Rhinegeist Brewery, Music Hall, the Contemporary Arts Center, The Aronoff, The Cincinnati Public Library—it’s all right here. The city has many little neighborhoods, all with their own character and vitality and charms. In that way it’s like Brooklyn. I also wanna note that a lot of people don’t realize that Cincinnati’s not flat like most of the

rest of Ohio to the North. We have hills. We have trees. And of course, there’s also the Ohio River. I grew up in Evansville, Ind., which is also on the river. When I moved to Cincinnati in 1993, the city was immediately familiar to me. My familiar. Has it changed over time? Yes, and so have I. It’s not just a place I live. It’s a huge part of my life. Literally the ground beneath me, my house, my family, my poems, my love.

**Is there a poet or writer, historically, whom you consider representative of Cincinnati? Is there a specific imprint you think the city might leave on a writer?**

Looking back, I guess I went sort of crazy answering question one, here, and in the process answered some of question two and probably four as well. Sorry about that. I think the imprint that any city makes on a person—and especially on a writer—probably depends in large part on what that person’s paying attention to. Every city’s a kaleidoscope of human triumph and struggle and routine dailiness, all of which offer myriad possibilities for contemplating and reimagining the fucked-up, blissed out world as we find it. That said, different cities have different musicks [sic], different rhythms. Cincinnati’s music ebbs and flows, has massive swirling highs and slowed-down-in-the-mud-depths lows. People who live here have these dynamics in their bodies. This city goes to 11, but it’s also sometimes almost inaudibly still water. Hopefully that range of being is part of what imprints itself on the writing that happens here.

As for writers representative of Cincinnati, a lot of people don’t realize that Kenneth Koch was from Cincinnati, but he hated the place, so while I love his work, I don’t consider him representative of the city... Nikki Giovanni’s from here as well, and her work speaks more clearly to the city’s history and beauty/tensions ... I guess the real truth is that I don’t know that much about the history of writing in Cincinnati. Maybe I should know more.

And yet, come to think of it, there is someone I consider to be central to writing in The Queen City, the late Aralee Strange. Aralee was a poet, performer, playwright, and filmmaker—the poet laureate of Main Street, in fact—the city’s writer in residence (all senses) for many years. She was also an incredible presence and mentor when I first moved here in the early nineties, who was kind to me and my work. She was someone who said YES! Back then, she lived on Main Street and wrote a lot about Over-the-Rhine. She had a lightning bolt tattoo on her temple, and a drawl when she talked (she was originally from Georgia). Her writing was gritty, human, luminous, unpretentious, (im)practical, and weird—from the streets to heaven, from the hills to the river. She was the city’s muse and the city was hers. Sadly, she passed away in 2013. By that point she had moved (back home) to a farm outside of Athens, Ga., but she was still writing, and hosting Word of Mouth, a monthly reading series that she started there. Aralee was always a huge believer in the open mic, so Word always started with an open, then there’d be a featured reader, after which the reading would go on with another open. Her spirit was inclusive, irreverent, anti-academic, communal, collaborative, experimental, and wildly serious about the power of language to alter consciousness and change everything. In her honor, Cincinnati poets Jim Palmarini and Mark Flanigan started Word of Mouth Cincinnati in 2014. As with the Athens version, there are always two open mics.

**Who are the Cincinnati writers that you admire these days? Are there newer voices from the city that you champion? Any books we should be aware of?**

There are lots of great writers in Cincinnati who need no introduction—Tyronne Williams, Norman Finkelstein, Sarah Rose Nordgren, Megan Martin, Ralph LaCharity, Dana Ward, and Kathy Y. Wilson, to name a few. But there are numerous others, who are less well known, including the aforementioned Palmarini and Flanigan, Bill Pollack, Nick Barrows, and Napoleon Maddox.

There are many amazing newcomers as well. We’re happy to have Brett Price back in Cincinnati (Brett, who was recently a resident of Brooklyn, ran the Friday Night Poetry Series readings at St. Marks and then was managing editor of *Ugly Duckling* before moving back here to teach). His manuscript, *Groundskeeper*, will no doubt be a book sooner than later. I love Brett’s poems. They’re slippery, layered and formally whacko/inventive—wildflowers grow in them; they are words, phrases, notes, impressions—alive and caterwaul, cinder block, grass stain and gutter leaf, one and all. Another newer voice is Samantha “Sam” McCormick. She’s a super dynamic reader and writer, and her magazine *Trigger* is one of the best new lit mags I’ve read in a long time. She’s also started a reading series called *The Greenhouse*, which has featured well known newer voices like Carrie Lorig and Michael Morse, as well as lots of locals. I’m hoping eventually to do a book for her on *Forklift Books*. There’s no hurry. Sadly, we’re losing her to Denver in January, but she’s from Cincinnati and wants to see what it’s like to live somewhere else, which I get.

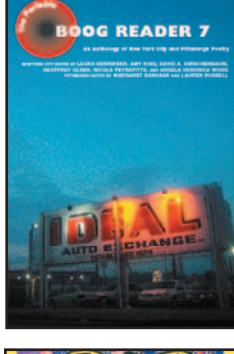
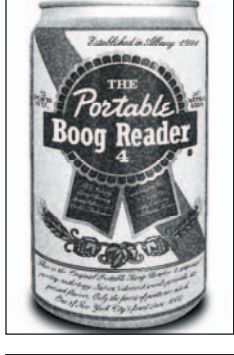
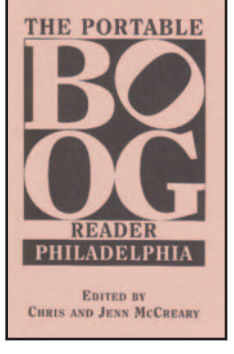
We also have a couple of great writing/art collectives, *Courage Friends* and *Chase Public*. *Courage Friends* puts on readings and art exhibitions, and publishes small books and broadsides. *Chase Public* has a space in the Cincinnati neighborhood of Northside. They also put on readings and do “short order” poetry (with typewriters, on demand). They were also the instigators, in collaboration with local non-profit arts organization *ArtWorks*, of the *Ink Your Love for Cincinnati Project*, where people were given the opportunity to compose lines/verses about Cincinnati, which were then assembled into a long giant poem. Pieces of that poem are now being painted and pasted up all over the city, but as part of the project people are also having the lines/verses tattooed on their bodies. It’s pretty amazing ... and sort of insane.

**In an era when the Internet is ubiquitous, there’s a sense that writers do not actually need to move to New York or another big city to pursue their careers, and yet they do. It’s certainly what lead me out of Cleveland. You’ve done a fair bit of traveling around the country, as both a poet and musician, so I’m wondering how you think the literary and artistic scene in Cincinnati compares to that of more established centers. Are there certain things that your city offers that others do not? Should the poets of Brooklyn be decamping to Cincinnati?**

Cincinnati’s a great, old river city on the verge-edge of the South. Cross the Ohio, you’re in Kentucky. Louisville, Chicago, Columbus, Cleveland, Nashville, Detroit, and Indianapolis are all within easy driving distance. The art and lit scenes in the city are booming. It doesn’t take all day to go the grocery store. The cost of living is CHEAP. Melanie and I have a house—seven miles from the heart of the city. It takes me 10 minutes to get to work. It costs two dollars a day to park. The CAC is one of the finest contemporary art museums in the country. There’s a Mark Mothersbaugh show there right now that rivals anything anywhere. In addition, there are dozens of alternative and pop-up spaces, amazing restaurants, goats, greener pastures, maples (there is nothing wrong with a maple), breweries (Cincinnati in the 19th century, and up until prohibition, was the brewing capital of the United States, and now we’re on the way to regaining that title), two universities and several colleges .... I could go on.

But here’s the thing, I’m 46 with a family, I’m not 20 in search of adventure. I hate hanging out at bars (unless I’m traveling, and even then not so much). I don’t like going to shows (I played a thousand shows—my ears are fried—it wouldn’t kill me if I never went to a rock show again—though I did see Judas Priest last year, which was dynamite, and I also got to see The Blood Brothers when they reunited—got a beer poured down the back of my shirt, got kicked in the back of the head—I loved it! Do I contradict myself? Very well then ...). I like to run (I walk out my front door run six miles and wind up back at my own front door). There are really good public schools. Mel and I love to cook and have people over for dinner. My art students are brilliant weirdos and natural born poets. I like that we don’t have to rush-around here. I have time. I have space. Physics. Black holes. So much joy. Devastating longing. My poems can be a mess, and my life can be fairly structured/stable. I couldn’t wish for better. In other words, Cincinnati’s a great place to live (especially with a family), though there are probably better places to live it up (and yet, I can’t think of many). Traveling’s great, and I love visiting other places, but after a couple of days away I’m always ready to get back to the routine. I write every day. My books, my desk, the table in the little room off the kitchen are my most important possessions—and I like them just so.

So should the poets of Brooklyn be decamping to Cincinnati? Depends on what you’re after. As hopefully I’ve made it clear, we’ve got it all, including some things I don’t want for myself or my family, but so does everywhere else. Some of my neighbors and I don’t see eye-to-eye politically, but we do see eye-to-eye on being good neighbors, and I like that there’s always someone around to remind me why I value the things I value. This is not a place where one can be complacent. Life is good here. It’s really, really good.



**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 Gelsing  
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  
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

**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 Limou  
Sheila Maldonado  
Jesus Papoleto  
Melendez  
Susan Miller  
Stephen Motika  
Marc Nasdor  
Charles North  
Jeni Olin  
Cecily Parks  
Nicole 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

**PBR5**

NEW YORK CITY  
Kostas  
Anagnopoulos  
L.S. Asekoff  
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  
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 Rinaldo  
Lola Rodriguez  
Bob Rosenthal  
Thaddeus Rutkowski  
Zohra Saed

Tracy K. Smith  
Mary Austin  
Speaker  
Sampson  
Starkweather  
Paige Taggart  
Anne Tardos  
Cat Tyc  
K. Abigail  
Walhausen  
Jo Ann Wasserman  
Phyllis Wat  
Rachel Zolf

BOSTON  
Ed Barrett  
Sean Cole  
Amanda Cook  
William Corbett  
Jim Dunn  
Elisa Gabbert  
Kythe Heller  
Fanny Howe  
Andrew Hughes  
Jack Kimball  
Gerrit Lansing  
Tanya  
Larkin

Ruth  
Lepson  
Lori Lubeski  
Jess Mynes  
Charley Shively  
Joel Sloman  
Joseph Torra  
Andi Werblin  
Carol Weston  
Elizabeth Marie  
Young

**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 Macdon-  
ald  
Travis Macdonald  
Paul Siegell

**PBR7**

NEW YORK CITY  
Rosebud Ben-Oni  
Leopoldine Core  
Steve Dalachinsky  
Nicholas DeBoer  
Ray DeJesus  
Francesca DeMusz  
Claire Donato  
Ian Dreibratt  
Anna Gurton-  
Wachter  
April Naoko Heck  
Darrel Alejandro  
Holnes  
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 Hoevenaer  
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

**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

**PBR9**

CINCINNATI  
cris cheek  
Charles Gabel  
Sidney Cherie Hilley  
Scott Holtzman  
Lisa Howe  
Manuel Iris  
Megan Martin  
mark s mendoza  
Brett Price  
Chelsea Tadeyeske

NEW YORK CITY  
Cornelia Barber  
Emily Brandt  
Chai-lun Chang  
Marisa Crawford  
Jim Feast  
Jess Feldman  
Bonny Finberg  
Alina Gregorian  
Anna  
Gurton-Wachter  
Barbara Henning  
Jen Hyde  
Tony Iantosca  
Peter Bogart  
Johnson  
Tsauroh Litzky  
Lara Lorenzo  
Sade Murphy  
Molly Rose Quinn  
Alan Semerdjian  
Ann Stephenson  
Carl Watson

