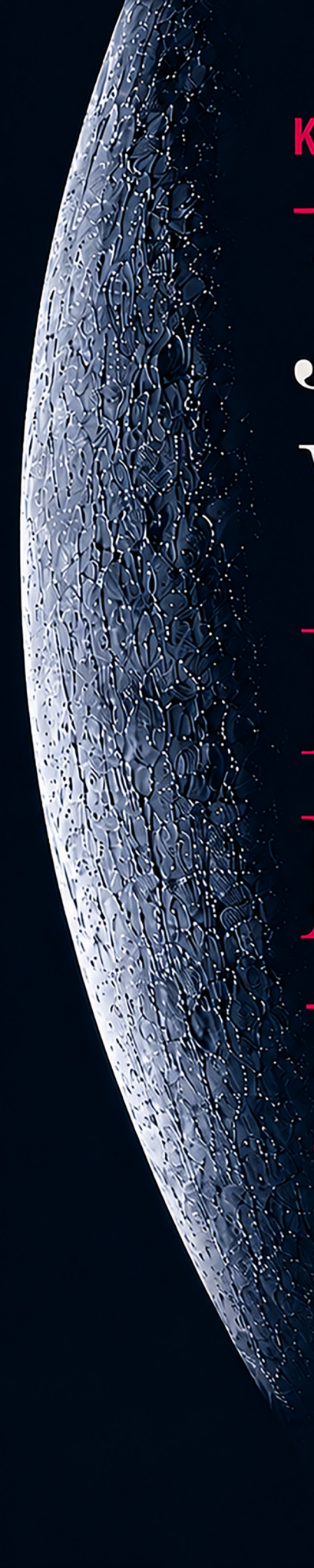




KEVIN KILLIAN

Jack and I
Were Both
Fluent in
Martian

*The Poetics-List Writings
of Kevin Killian*

Collected from the
UB Poetics List archive,
1995–2014

EDITED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION,
BY KRISTEN M. FABIANS

Jack and I Were Both Fluent in Martian

The UB Poetics List Writings of Kevin Killian, 1995–2014

Collected from the UB Poetics List archive, 1995–2014

The UB Poetics List was, for two decades, a mailing list where poets argued, mourned, gossiped, and thought out loud together. Kevin Killian was one of its most beloved voices, and this book collects what he wrote there. Because he posted from an account he shared with his wife, the poet Dodie Bellamy, his own writing has been picked out post by post and reproduced whole — each piece under a short editorial note, and set beside the line he was answering whenever he was writing someone back. The readings and notices he sent are gathered apart, and everything else is kept in a catalogue at the end, so that nothing he wrote is lost and nothing he sent is hidden.

Edited, with an introduction, by Kristen M. Fabians

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Introduction

The Man Who Introduced Himself

Kevin Killian came to the UB Poetics List in the spring of 1995 and, for very nearly twenty years, did a thing almost no one else on it thought to do: he kept saying hello. “Hello everyone, it’s Kevin Killian” the posts begin, again and again, across a decade and a half — as though each time he arrived in the room he assumed, with a courtesy that was also a kind of wonder, that we might have forgotten him. We had not. But the greeting tells you everything about the man who wrote it: that he considered the list a party he was lucky to be invited to, that he meant to introduce himself to every stranger in it, and that he never once mistook a mailing list for anything other than a room full of people he might come to love.

He shared an address with his wife. For much of the 1990s the messages went out over one shared account — Dodie Bellamy and Kevin Killian, two of the founders of what the Bay Area had learned to call New Narrative, filing from the same machine — and the list learned to read the sign-off before it knew whom it was arguing with. “Hi, this is really from Kevin and not from Dodie” one post clarifies, and the clarification is its own small comedy of the marriage: two writers, one wire, forever announcing which of them had reached the keyboard first. I have kept only Kevin’s side of that household here, following his signatures where the archive gives them and his subjects where it does not; Dodie’s posts are hers, and belong to a different book. Where the two of them wrote as one — the conference dispatches, the reading notices from their kitchen table — I have let him keep the byline he took.

What he was, on the list, was an enthusiast — in the old, almost theological sense of the word, a man visibly possessed. He went to everything and reported back. His long dispatch from the 1995 Blaser conference in Vancouver is the purest specimen: four days of panels rendered as gossip, hero-worship, and sudden criticism — a dispatch in which he can pronounce that “Steve McCaffery is a God,” report that Michael Ondaatje reduced the Killian-Bellamy household to “two American rabbits caught in the headlights of an oncoming car,” and grieve, in earnest, over a table of rare White Rabbit books he could not afford. “I had this eerie feeling of history right in my hands” he wrote from that trip, and the sentence is the whole of his poetics — history was never abstract to him, it was a book on a table, a poet at a lectern, a friend across a lunch he could just barely believe he was having.

He was, by any accounting, one of the most learned people in the room, and he wore it as lightly as anyone ever has. He had written Jack Spicer's life — the biography with Lewis Ellingham, and later the *Collected* — and Spicer moves through these posts like a household saint: "Jack Spicer and I were both fluent in Martian," he announces, and then, deadpan, supplies the vocabulary. He knew the San Francisco Renaissance the way other people know their own families, because in a sense it was his family; the Spicer circle, the New Narrative writers, the poets of Small Press Traffic, whose readings he tirelessly announced to a list three thousand miles away that mostly could not attend them. The notices are here, gathered apart — a working literary life, kept separate from the writing, so the reader can see how much of his generosity went simply into telling people where to be on a Friday night.

It is worth pausing on what kind of critic he was, because he was one — though he practised a criticism that looked, to the untrained eye, exactly like enthusiasm. He did not rank and he did not gatekeep; his reviews had only ever one verdict, which was yes, and only one object, which was to send you toward the thing he loved. "Anyhow it's well worth six dollars, I say, go for it," he wrote of a book in 1998 — a sentence that could have gone straight to Amazon, where, years later, he would write thousands of reviews and become, improbably, one of that website's celebrated critics, the whole omnivorous run of them gathered after his death into a book taken seriously as criticism. But he had been writing those reviews on the Poetics List first, before the form had a name, with the same democratic appetite that set a beloved thriller and a difficult chapbook on precisely the same footing. Where the professional critic guards the canon's doors, Kevin only ever tried to enlarge the party.

And he was funny — reliably, structurally funny, in a register the list did not otherwise supply. Where the Poetics List loved nothing so much as a theory of the line break, Killian wanted to know which movie star should play Frank O'Hara, whether cubism influenced the novel, and — perennially — whether you could settle a bet for him. "Help me win a bet" a 2003 post opens, and half his best writing takes that form: the crowd-sourced question, the shameless appeal to the collective memory of a few hundred poets, the delight when they delivered. He was not slumming when he did this. He believed, with a seriousness that looked like frivolity, that the trivia of a culture — its stars, its snorers, its dermatologists — was continuous with its art, and that a mailing list was as good a place as any to prove it.

The comedy sat on top of a great deal of death. Killian belonged to a generation of gay men who had buried most of a world, and the list caught him in the long aftermath — the friend dying just as the plane took off, the elder gone, the obituary written in the same voice that had, a week earlier, been casting a Frank O'Hara biopic. He never performed the grief; he simply recorded it, plainly, alongside everything else, so that a reading notice and a death notice sit in his archive at exactly the same volume. That refusal to raise his voice for the dead is, I have come to think, the most moving thing about him. He had learned that the dead are best kept close to the living — that you honour them by going on talking, going on going out, going on introducing yourself.

His activity on the list falls, like the list's own, into two great decades. The 1995–1998 years are the flood — the New Narrative quarrels, the Spicer lore, the conference reports, the household filing at full volume — and they make up more than half of what follows. The 2000s thin out, as everyone's did, into occasional dispatches, the crowdsourced questions, a poem or a notice; his last post arrives in 2014, a quiet remark about fiction and verse, and then the room he had greeted so many times falls silent on his side. He would live another five years, famous by then for other things — the thousands of Amazon reviews, the plays, the poems of the Argento Series, the Lambda-winning stories — but the list had had the best of his daily voice, and it is that voice, not the bibliography, that this book preserves.

I have set the posts in the order they were sent, which is the only order that does him justice; his mind did not proceed by theme but by occasion, and to sort him into categories would be to lose the very thing that made him himself — the man who could move, in a single week, from Spicer's *Martian* to a movie-star casting call to the news that a friend had died. The reviews and essays and reports are given whole. The readings and notices are listed apart, so the record of what he was doing stays legible beside the record of what he was writing. Everything else — the forwards, the one-line jokes, the posts that were really Dodie's — is logged in the catalogue at the back, so that nothing is hidden and nothing is lost.

His final message, in January of 2014, ends on a small hesitation about genre — “Maybe that's the urge of the novelist, not the poet.” It is a characteristic last word: unresolved, generous, still curious after twenty years, still turning a question over for the pleasure of it. I have kept it where it fell, at the end, because that is how he left — not with an elegy but with a wondering, mid-thought, as though he might yet log on tomorrow to introduce himself once more. Hello everyone. It was Kevin Killian.

— Kristen M. Fabians

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1995

To you

19 Mar 1995

Gary Sullivan, then a young poet and editor, drew what may be Kevin's very first turn on the list — and Kevin arrived the way he meant to go on, paying court.

Hi Gary. You did not mention that you, yourself, Gary Sullivan, have a "groove factor" of about 11 or 12.

And even those numbers are too pubescent to describe the full engorged groove factor you walk amidst, like an angel in a cloud.

Thanks—for being you.

Kevin Killian 1995

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Re: Memory Play

21 Mar 1995

Cris Cheek, the British poet and performer, had been puzzling over Carla Harryman's Memory Play — a Poets Theater piece Kevin had acted in — and an old castmate can never quite resist a cue.

| *You aren't alone. I completely agree with you about Memory Play*

Dear Cris Cheek, I'll jump in & give my 2 cents worth on Memory Play, I am an American actor who was trapped inside the darn thing for ten months in a workshop production here in San Francisco, and I'll tell you, it took me eight and a half months before I figured out what it was "about." Harryman, the author, and Philip Horvitz, our director, were always mum whenever any of us actors asked, two Cheshire cats sitting there creamily on the sidelines, always replying only, "You decide." So finally I did. Hope you're familiar with the film "Mildred Pierce," because "Memory Play" is "Mildred Pierce" with a happy or at any rate conciliatory ending.

However I may be wrong about this. Years ago I wrote a review of Harryman's book "Vice" and stated forthrightly my belief that "Vice" must have been influenced by CH's constant viewing of the US cop show "Miami Vice." Two minutes later the phone was ringing and she denied it, saying she had never watched MV in her life! Consequently I know a little bit about "Memory Play" but don't go by me.

I played the "Miltonic Humilator" and had a wonderful costume, designed by John Woodall, a kind of Worth gown and a huge Merlin type hat. I had to sing and dance in several production numbers, and taunt all the other characters; finally,

defeated by my own love for the Pelican, I succumbed to a kind of Madama Butterfly swoon and killed myself-off stage. It was great, and Cris, you can see it on video if you have the VHS format over there.

All the other actors were good, and I was a bit abashed because CH and PH, realizing that the Miltonic Humiliator doesn't really have very many lines in the published script, and perhaps not wanting to waste my talents, allowed me, no, ordered me, to make up my own lines.

I remember initially during our first workshop version of "Memory Play," that Kathy Acker was playing the part of the "Pelican,"-I suppose CH couldn't secure Kathy for the ten months it took us to rehearse and present the play. But think of her saying those lines, her great, scabrous energy melting the proscenium.

Thanks for letting me put in my two cents on "Memory Play."

So long now-

Kevin Killian

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40, 50, and 60 year olds

04 Apr 1995

The list had been arguing about sexual harassment and the figure of the predator; because he and Dodie shared the one account, Kevin opens by insisting that this time the voice is his own.

Hi, this is really from Kevin and not from Dodie. Dear Gary Sullivan, I can't decide how disingenuous you're being when, in describing the horror of sexual harassment, you ask us how would you like it if some 40, 50, 60 year old guy had his hands down your pants, as though the increasing decades made the horror more exponential. As though if the guy was 30 it wouldn't be so bad and 20 maybe actually okay or groovy.

Please clarify on this important point. Otherwise you're summoning up some hypothetical bogeyman to scare young poets & playing into a social construction of a predator (the predator is incredibly old, ancient, even tho' he may try to look young) (age itself is horror) (the older one gets, the more vampiric the sexual predator becomes as he needs the young blood of poets) (the prey, finally, ages much more slowly than the old, 40, 50, 60- year old predator?)

Yours-Kevin Killian, aet 42

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Leland Hickman, Joe Brainard

08 Apr 1995

Leland Hickman edited the journal Temblor; Joe Brainard wrote I Remember; both were newly dead of AIDS. On this subject Kevin was never quite able, or willing, to keep quiet.

Spencer Selby says that "everyone today could benefit from remembering what [Leland Hickman] did and how he touched so many." Ron Silliman says that "it's a damn shame that Joe [Brainard] did not live to see [the reprint of his book "I Remember" by Penguin]".)

We could all benefit from remembering that these two great angels of poetry died from AIDS. I know we're all AIDS'd out in many ways but the word itself only gains in potency from not being mentioned.

We could also admit that we are living in the age of HIV and that all our writing is AIDS writing whether we know it or not. I know this is my own particular King Charles' head but here I go again. I'll paraphrase myself (and Sarah Schulman) again when I add that history will judge us not by our publication record in Conjunctions or anywhere else, nor if we ever publish another poem again, but on how we responded to this plague in our own terms in our own lives. Can I recommend to you all Aaron Shurin's work on a poetics of AIDS which has been appearing here & there, most notably in the latest issue of Apex of the M, edited by Lew Daly, Alan Gilbert, Kristin Prevallet and Pam Rehm?

Later. I sound like an old nag here but, that's Cassandra speaking through me, not the "real" Kevin Killian. I'm interested in the debate about power (standing, sexuality, harassment, desire) & please let it continue swirling around me.

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Jack Smith

12 Apr 1995

Another aside to Gary Sullivan, this one pure camp: Jack Smith was the underground filmmaker of Flaming Creatures, and the B-movie queen Maria Montez his reigning saint.

Dear Gary, and don't forget Jack Smith saying that the greatest two lines in American film were spoken by Maria Montez in "Cobra Woman"-

"Geef me the cobarah chewel! Geef me the cobarah chewel!"

How right he was!

-DB & KK

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Throttling

23 Apr 1995

The list was trading stories of how each was first seized by poetry — Chris's word for it was throttling — and Kevin reaches back to a Long Island boyhood.

From Kevin Killian: I don't remember what poets we read in school. The book we had to read was called "A Separate Peace." But I remember being furious and moping around my parents' house when Time magazine said Frank O'Hara had been killed by a dune buggy on Fire Island.

I was very pouty for weeks & my dad said, "Why don't you write to Louis Zukofsky?" I perkled up & asked him who he was. He didn't really know, but LZ had been on the same TV program (NET) that O'Hara was. "And plus," he said, "he lives in Port Jefferson. And he's always writing letters to the editor" [of our nearby paper, The Port Jefferson "Record"]—"complaining about this or that."

Well I got on my bike, I was like 13 or 14, and headed to Port Jefferson which was about 10 miles away and went to the house of Louis Zukofsky. He would always write letters to the paper about traffic in front of his house, etc.

He was not happy to see me—I don't think he cared for school children. I was about 13. He was a mean curmudgeon, but the garden was beautiful to my eyes. I resolved as soon as I was old enough to get a drivers license, to take a big station wagon and drive right through his hedges, in the middle of the night. I think my brief encounter with Zukofsky colored the rest of my reading of him, ever since. "99 Flowers" indeed! He wouldn't have had 1 flower left if I had had my way! Luckily my childhood anger faded by the time I was 15 or so and started to drive. I didn't meet any other poets until I was about 17 and met Paul Blackburn in New York. But Alex Haley did come to our classroom & told us all about writing the "Autobiography of Malcolm X."

I'm reading this over & I'm, like, stunned at how stupid I sound.

Well,
that's one version of my "THROTTLING" Any others? Chris

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Through May the shared account spoke almost entirely in Dodie's voice — her exchanges on the body, the abject, and the Real — while Kevin kept still. The edition catches him again in June, home from Vancouver and standing, almost at once, at a graveside.

Re: Warren Sonbert 1947-1995

07 Jun 1995

Warren Sonbert was the San Francisco filmmaker whose lyric montages Kevin had long loved; this is Kevin answering the notice of his death — one more to the disease.

Thank you Charles for reminding us all about Warren Sonbert.

Warren Sonbert died on Wednesday, at home and surrounded by friends. He was 47 years old.

He seemed to live a charmed life — travelling the world, attending operas in Europe and North American, having his work shown at Festivals and museums. But charms are haunted.

Oh how I remember how I kept bugging Warren to "cast" me in one of his films & him explaining patiently that his films weren't really "cast" in that way—he said once that my shadow could appear in one—but that wasn't enough for me . . . I remember how he was so generous & expansive & we argued about George Cukor over and over. How when my 2nd play appeared he wrote this thumbs-up review in the paper that thrilled all of us who were in it, tho' I knew he only came in the 1st place to take in Carla Harryman's skillful, wiggy impersonation of Dodie. Oh, when will this terrible disease leave us all alone & go back to whatever hole it climbed out of in space, but that will never happen unless we do more. God bless him & thank you again, Charles.

-Kevin Killian

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Report on Blaser Conference

07 Jun 1995

He had just come back from Vancouver, where Robin Blaser — Spicer and Duncan's companion out of the Berkeley Renaissance, long settled in Canada — had been honoured across four days. Maria Damon asked the absent for a report; Kevin, who never met a roomful of poets he didn't want to take attendance of, obliged at length.

Maria Damon wrote:

speaking of the blaser conference, cd someone —or several of you —so we can compile a composite profile —give us a report over the net for those of us who are interested but unable to attend? hi pts, lo pts, entertaining anecdotes, and overall vibe-picture? how's he doing anyway? descriptions, poems, riffs, meditations and reminiscences? thanks in advance! —maria d

My Report-Kevin Killian

Brief & sketchy. Okay, well the "hi pts" for me were as follows:

Dodie is right about Susan Howe & that she stole the show during this one long reading with 22 poets. She stood on tiptoes and read & made everyone else seem

half baked-no-pallid. Well actually I enjoyed some other readings quite a bit-incl. Deanna Ferguson, Dorothy Lusk Trujillo or whatever her name is, and other Canadian poets new to me. Pierre Joris, your camel poem sure pleased the crowd, or was it camels, or horses?

Steve McCaffery is a God. Susan Clark gave a very emotional, moving reading, and Lisa Robertson is becoming the new updated Elizabeth Smart. I had heard Karen MacCormack here in San Francisco before, but now she is even better, understated, in control, dignified, a dynamo too.

Joanne Kyger read a piece about seeing Quan Yin-the Buddhist goddess-or whatever-and Dodie interviewed her in the women's "washroom" asking her if she really saw Quan Yin and JK said, "Yes, but you have to be on the right substance."

Gosh, I seem to be praising all these women, well, that's me to a T. I didn't even mention Anne Waldman yet, a show all to herself . . . And what about that Rachel Blau Du Plessis! Rachel if you're listening to this, "Drafts" 24 has opened up to a new theatricality & largeness of expression and scope that's just marvelous.

Several have noted how Robin was in attendance during every event-for 4 days, from 9:30 a.m. till past midnight. Needless to say I didn't match his record & there were several panels I skipped or missed. I don't have his stamina-however maybe if it was all about me I would have attended it all too. His reading which climaxed the whole affaire was outstanding, he read "Exody," "Even on Sunday," the new poem "Nomad" and another poem that's in progress, very much so.

Great starpower! Speaking of which, I have a new dream man, Canadian poet & novelist Michael Ondaatje. We had heard that he was the sexiest writer in Canada, which is not quite the case close up, but nevertheless he has piercing blue eyes & this wonderful accent I could listen to for a week on end. Dodie spotted him first but I wasn't far behind. After that, all he had to do was open his mouth or eyes and we were transfixed, like two American rabbits caught in the headlights of an oncoming car. Duh. A genius as far as I'm concerned. Dodie was quite jealous when she overheard M.O. telling Catriona Strang that she was brilliant.

Okay, but Catriona was brilliant; the performance she gave with Francois Houle, the avant-garde clarinetist, playing 2 clarinets at once at times, while Catriona barked out syllables, words, gritty demanding sentences, around the letters "R" and "B" made a sensation at the Festival Opening. Charles Bernstein opened the "opening" with a very smart witty talk that hit the right notes, including a rapidfire mention of all the groups Robin has been associated with (Boston Gang, Vancouver poets, SF Renaissance, New American poets, Berkeley Renaissance) then reminding us that he has been all these things and more and none.

The organizers worked like dogs. I felt sorry for them but they did not seem to be feeling sorry for themselves. Bravo to all! I saw most of Charles Watts and Karen Tallman but everyone seemed totally together.

I did feel the strange disquieting presence of Warren Tallman, like a ghost, haunting the whole conference and the whole city and I kept wondering what he was making of all this hoopla.

One man called "Robert Hullot-Kentor" gave a fine, iconoclastic paper, very Adorno-based, basically saying that there's no point to recovering the public world, that today there's no public and in fact no world.

Next door to the Emily Carr School where the panels were held was a very fine show called "In Search of Orpheus: Some Bay Area Poets & Painters 1945-65," curated by Scott Watson. Jess, Tom Field, Harry Jacobus, Blaser himself, Lyn Brockway, a bright crayon drawing by Spicer, etc., etc, most of the work from Blaser's own collection. Here the work of Fran Herndon shone like a revelation. Here were the lithographs she did for Spicer's book *The Heads of the Town* up to the Aether, and the larger sports-themed collages you can see reproduced in Jim Herndon's book "Everything as Expected." Fran Herndon was in Vancouver attending the conference in person & received a tremendous ovation when picked out of the audience and introduced. It's about time such a talented artist began receiving the recognition due her. So to see it all happening before one's eyes was an incredible lift. (Best news is, some of the work-including that shown at the gallery- is for sale) (and not expensive either) (E mail me for more details if you're interested)

Kristin Prevallet made a stir with her slide presentation, during the first panel, "Companions," outlining the life & work of the late Helen Adam. Prevallet's research into the Adam papers at the Lockwood Library showed us all for the first time the extent and power of Adam's greatness as a poet & writer. And artist too, for Prevallet was able to bring out of the archives several-eight or nine?-of Helen Adam's unique collage-based works, which were shown in the Scott Gallery as part of the Orpheus show-in fact it's hard to figure how incomplete the show would have been without them.

For bibliophiles-the appearance of a dozen or so copies of Helen Adam's rare White Rabbit book "The Queen o' Crow's Castle" (1958) ill. by Jess-on the book table-for sale-and only \$15.00 (Canadian) apiece-would have made you swoon! Try and get one in San Francisco for less than \$100.00 (American)-and these were white as snow, no trace of fading or foxing-MINT! Well-they're all gone now for sure!

In fact the book table-book section-organized by Vancouver's Black Sheep Books-was totally tempting & I must have spent, oh, God, I don't even want to remember.

I had fun having lunch with Joanne Kyger, Dora FitzGerald, George Stanley and Fran Herndon one sunny afternoon & then all of them sparking each other to more and more remembrances of Spicer faster than I could take it all in . . . and introducing them to Kristen so that they could tell her all about Helen Adam . . . I had this eerie feeling of history right in my hands.

There could have been another wonderful reading just culled from those who were there in the audience, quite a swell crowd including Lee Ann Brown, Elizabeth Willis, Erin Moure, Myung Mi Kim, Kevin Magee, Laynie Browne, Matthew Stadler, Colin Smith, etc., etc.

I felt safe going up to Vancouver because, with the help of so many pals, I had secured quite a number of "tributes" to Robin from those who could not attend. With those in my attache case I felt like a king. Ellen Tallman & I got to read them out loud at the dinner. Some of them were from people on this Poetics List, and I will be writing to you privately, each of you, to thank you at length, but for now let me close by thanking you all in toto-Giorgio Agamben, Don Allen, Bruce Andrews, James Broughton, Cid Corman, Robert Creeley, Samuel R. Delany, Allen Ginsberg, Robert Gluck, Barbara Guest, Thom Gunn, Lyn Hejinian, Jess, Robert Kelly, Gerrit Lansing, Denise Levertov, Jackson Mac Low, Bob Perelman, Avital Ronell, Claude Royet-Journoud, Ron Silliman and I'm leaving 1 or 2 out. But thanks to you all!

And then to come back home and realize that Warren Sonbert was dying just when DB and I were getting onto the plane.

All right! That's enough from me. P.S., to Maria, Dodie is still going to mail you her version of events, BlaserFest Back Channel. You too Rae.

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Bedside reading

23 Jun 1995

Kenneth Goldsmith had revived the list's bedside-reading round, each member laying out the nightstand; few on this earth could furnish a nightstand like Kevin.

This is Kevin Killian. I'm glad to see this feature return, as I too read Vanity Fair regularly tho' the book list is not my favorite. The true crime articles are.

Here is what I've just picked up from around my bed:

"Vel" by Peter Inman-fantastic. Four stars to you, P. Inman. We printed one of these poems in "Mirage #4/Period[ical]" but now I see, it was not the best one after all, there are many, many just as good or better!

"Castle King Four," by Jim Reagan, who sent me this book, haven't read it yet, don't know why he sent it. He said it was a peace offering. I don't know who he is! Seems to be a novel that pits Nazis against the OSS.

"Sliver," by Ira Levin. I read it about every six months. Dodie wrote a paper about it once, for Todd Baron and Carolyn Kemp's zine "REMAP," on "narration." "A zillion times better than the movie," she says. When is the Ira Levin Conference happening?

Claude Royet-Journoud, "A Descriptive Method," tr. Keith Waldrop-it's small, I should have finished this last week. Didn't. Just found it.

"Berlin Diptychon" by John Yau & Bill Barrette. I'm copying one of the poems here, "The Night Beast is Best," for my new poem, which will have a better title. This book is very luxe, glossy, heavy ink smell, has Berlin written all over me.

"Tender Agencies," by Dennis Denisoff. Why this book isn't a best seller I'll never know. Dennis D. is so smart & so accessible. He is a former member of the Kootenay School and from what I understand will be working at Princeton this fall. Yay Dennis.

"Abusing the Telephone," by Dennis Barone. We had Dennis B. read at Small Press Traffic where he read some of this. We were screaming, kind of. I mean it was sedate in a way. This is a very fiction collective kind of book, tho published by Drogue. Dennis, any one of these tales could have been a novel, I say, expand, don't contract, be expansive like Whitman.

2 new books by Alice Notley. Haven't opened it yet.

Thom Gunn, "The Man with Night Sweats." Thom Gunn is a local hero & a swell guy. This book is his best one yet.

"Arshile #4" ed. Mark Salerno. Arshile #4 features an interview with Gilbert Sorrentino. I always wondered why I had never met GS since he works at Stanford and I'm in San Francisco. Now I find that "the Bay Area is so utterly antithetical to me that I find myself, at all times, struggling against its cuteness, its apathy, its general air of paralysis, its relentless small-townishness, so that it's hard to imagine being 'mellowed out' in the throes of battle. I don't quite know what it is about the place, but the entire Bay Area, with the source of infection being, of course, that citadel of provincialism, San Francisco, has the air of an amateur stage production set in sinister natural surroundings." What a jerk. How about that "source of infection" metaphor Mr. Sorrentino? Are we afraid of

the AIDS virus at Stanford University? Anyhow Arshile #4 has this wonderful piece in it by Yoko Ono and as usual a marvelous cover, this time by Jasper Johns.

Bruce Andrews, "Ex Why Zee," collected, I don't know, work for the "theater"? Black and white drawing on the front, "pathetic masculinity" as the art forum says. "Abject art" my favorite. All these little men running around doing disgusting things, . . . four stars for the cover alone, belongs in the Whitney.

"Apex of the M" #3. Read it from cover to cover searching for the explanation from the editors, why on earth they went ahead last time and printed that work by King Homophobe Ed Dorn! No explanation, still. One editor told me that if they explained every editorial policy they made it would be too long a magazine. Fine. Just wanted to put in my 2 cents on this subject. Again.

"Everything as Expected," by James Herndon. This book, from the 70's, is the essential insider's guide to the collaboration between Jack Spicer & Fran Herndon. Color plates. Seven of these collages were shown at recent Blaser conference. Five stars.

"Tony & Susan," by Austin Wright. I think I got this mixed up with "Austin and Mabel" but instead of being about the relatives of Emily Dickinson it is some kind of literary horror novel. Check it out. I'm up to Chapter Five.

"Esther: Her Murder Haunts a Small Town in Oklahoma." True crime book. Esther is a schoolteacher, in her seventies I think, I think she was murdered in her sleep by some former students, but she's just gone to bed just now at the place I've put it down.

"Written in Blood," by Caroline Graham. She is my new favorite detective writer. Okay, so the ends of her books are always stupid.

"Empire of Words: the Reign of the OED," by John Willensky. This guy teaches at UBC and this book studies the use of citation in the different editions of the OED to come to some conclusions about cultural studies. Work it, girl.

Finally I've come to the floor. Okay and one last book I've just finished from the library, "The Juror," by George Dawes Green. had to get this one since it's the basis of the upcoming Demi Moore picture. The back jacket says that Dawes Green is a poet and the author of "the acclaimed novel "The Caveman's Valentine" and he looks about 12. Excellent! George Dawes Green are you on this poetics list? Come on down!

Thank you Kenneth Goldsmith for arranging this group.

Yours-Kevin K. 1995

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Re: Yasusada = Ern Malley

26 Jul 1995

Araki Yasusada was the supposed Hiroshima survivor whose poems had charmed several magazines before the authorship came into doubt; the list was trying to work out whether he had ever existed, and Kevin had a story.

This is Kevin Killian . . . I have my own two cents to add about the Yasusada saga, but first I want to know if I understand correctly, is "First Intensity" publishing yet more "new" work by Yasusada? It seems like a nightmare from several years back.

I remember trying to get in touch with Tosa Motokiyu who for some reason had a P O Box in Sonoma County somewhere, and was sent a phone number-it was like a spy novel by Ian Fleming. Anyhow late at night, say, after midnight, a woman called me up and told me that Tosa Motokiyu was not to be bothered any more, that he was going through a painful divorce and no, no matter what I thought, neither the Yasusada circle nor the Motokiyu-Norinaga-Kyogin circle had any homosexual implications. No unlike the Georgekreis or the Spicer group there was no homosexual taint to either Japanese group.

"I was just wondering," I said defensively.

"You have been misled, by your own imagination," she replied calmly. "You don't understand the Japanese way of life."

This was so true I couldn't think of what to add. She explained that Japanese poets giggle at Western homosexuality.

After we hung up I had this uneasy feeling and started wondering whether or not Motokiyu had been honest with me.

Then I heard that the whole Yasusada corpus was very much a contemporary product of a middle-aged white male poet, well known in the US, but not well enough known for his own self-esteem as we say here in San Francisco. This man had come up with the idea of inventing a whole Hiroshima poetry to test the openness of U S magazines. He was frustrated that his own poetry was being rejected at every turn whereas people of color no matter how untalented were being published. "Yasusada" was to be his revenge on the whole idea of the "politically correct," "multicultural" range of writing being published & preferred today.

I was sent dozens and dozens of Yasusada's poems, and like Ron, was impressed. This was clearly a labor of love, if a little crazy and, by implication, way homophobic and racist. These events took place several years ago as I say. But I am still smarting from that dry little laugh on the phone from Sonoma. If Lee

Chapman is on this list perhaps she could clear up how and when she came in contact with the poetry she printed in "First Intensity"? Thanks you all!

Rod writes:

*"I feel an obligation to point out that it's not clear that Haraki Yasusada actually exists. I published a group discussion in _Aerial 6/7_ >called "Renga & the New Sentence" by what purported to be three Japanese poet/critics. I suspected at the time that it might be a fake, but chose to publish it anyway, as it was simply too good to turn down. I've since had a conversation that *seems* to confirm my suspicions (No, I can't say more than that). Tho it's still unclear." Both Avery Burns and Eric Selland swear that Yasusada is a fictive project, as are his translators. Selland, a translator of Japanese by trade who's spent years over there and knows the poetry scene intimately, should be in a position to know. Still, the work in Conjunctions is very good. I posted an enthusiastic comment to this list when it first came out that I believe Luigi-Bob may have reprinted in Taproot. Ron*

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Millay

29 Aug 1995

Alan Golding, the scholar of American poetry, floated Millay as a closet radical of the sonnet; the question found Kevin at his happiest, chasing an unfashionable enthusiasm.

Alan Golding wrote:

Since I like to be a little perverse: can Edna St. Vincent Millay be said to reclaim the sonnet sequence for "alternative" purposes?

I think so, but I have long wanted to find out how . . . do you, Alan (or any of the other fine critics on this list) know of anyone who is doing any interesting work on Millay right now? Yours, Kevin

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Millay

01 Sep 1995

This picks up his Millay question of the week before, after the list's readers had written back — most of them by private channel — with somewhere to begin.

Thank you to Jordan and to Gale, and all who msged me back-channel, with your hints on further reading on St. Vincent Millay . . . now I know where to turn, believe me I was at my wits end trying to find something good. I was even at that awful stage familiar to you all I'm sure where I was beginning to feel, God, maybe I'LL have to write something-that sinking feeling . . .

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Re: I'm dreadfully sorry !

11 Sep 1995

A misfired private message had spilled onto the open list; Kevin, who could never let an accident go unimproved, answered in the key of high Proustian scandal.

I'm sorry, too, that our sex games got so far out of hand. Yes, I, Kevin Killian, let us whole thing go too far. I should never have pushed Dave Ayre to the very limits of pain and pleasure. It was I who force him to say mean things about the man he loves most deeply in all the world-in this case, Charles Bernstein-before I let him touch me. I got this idea out of Proust, vol 3 I believe, when the evil girl forces the musician's daughter to bring out the picture of the dead father while they make love in front of it, bringing tears to the daughter's eyes, tears of shame, tears of remorse, tears of a dark lust that neither Dave nor I can forsake for the sake of propriety or any other motive.

Dave, Dave, did you have to push that send button and broadcast our FOLIE all over the known universe!

There's nothing worse, as Proust always said, than an uppity bottom. Sorry, all! And how could you, Charles, have known what a Proustian part you were playing in this age old drama of revenge, suspense, and long distance love affairs?

Goodbye.

| So good to be here. Feels like home !

Wait til I get you home young man!

| Bye !

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A happy result of a long process

11 Sep 1995

The list had been passing a renga — linked collaborative verse — around for weeks, to some members' exhaustion; Kevin found a second use for it, by way of a Cleis Press erotica assignment.

I know some of you are tired of the whole renga ordeal, but this is my take on the subject.

I was asked to contribute to an anthology of "erotica" (ie porn) called "Switch Hitters" (from Cleis Press) the premise being, everything else being equal, that lesbians would write gay male erotica and gay men try our hands at lesbian erotica. The editors encouraged me, saying that I, I Kevin Killian, had one advantage - because I, unlike many of the other male contributors, have actually seen a vagina.

Still I was stumped for a topic, no, what would Henry James call it, a donnee!

So when the renga began to appear, I found it! My story, "Renga," takes place at a writers' colony in Connecticut, the narrator is a New Formalist called Jane, whose tired old poetry has begun to bore even herself, tho it has won many prizes. A young girl comes to her bungalow every morning with her breakfast-this girl, an aspiring, perky language writer, re-invigorates Jane physically and changes her entire approach to poetics when the two collaborate on a renga together. (And much else, since the editors demand 1 sex act on every two pages.) All this on the sunny beaches of Long Island Sound and the exquisite, semi-secluded grounds of the writers' colony.

When I was casting about for a name for this vibrant character, the maid, I was calling her "Karen"-don't know why! But Dodie suggested, "Lee Ann"-don't know why! Anyhow the story was finished, accepted, look for it in February, and thanks everybody for all your assistance and inspiration . . . you will all recognize your individual lines of poetry for sure.

Okay-see you!

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Re: Sitwell

30 Sep 1995

Lisa Robertson and Jordan Davis had been admiring Edith Sitwell; Kevin turned out to have a rather more personal claim on the Dame.

Lisa and Jordan,

This is Kevin Killian speaking. If you enjoy Edith Sitwell, I know you will enjoy the forthcoming film "At Home with the Stars #3, featuring Denton Welch," by the NY videographer Joe Westmoreland, in which I yours truly play Dame Edith Sitwell in this feature-length version of the life of Denton Welch.

I got to write all my own dialogue, dress up in fabulous clothes and jewels, and welcome Denton into my London flat . . . serve him tea . . . we discuss poetry and literature, and Denton's illness and death. As I was speaking underneath this wonderful jewel-studded turban, I believe I was able to channel Sitwell's actual voice: she spoke through me just as Lorca did to Spicer! Only this is in living color, and pixel vision too. Anyhow watch for this show at an obscure art film festival near you early next year. However, Lisa, you are the Sitwell de nos jours, the Edith of Vancouver, and your pudeur, wit and brilliance when reading will never be forgotten by any who have seen you read; however, I had the right dress (one of Dodie's) and headdress, so it is a tossup.

Did you know that Edith met, in the course of her career, not only Denton Welch but Raquel Welch too? XXX Kevin

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Re: Poetry in Motion (Review)

16 Oct 1995

The list had been discussing Ron Mann's poetry documentary Poetry in Motion; Kevin, true to form, wanted to talk about the filmmaker's other picture, and about the lost kings of the Twist.

I hear all the discussion about "Poetry in Motion" and hope that you all on the list serv also get a chance to see Ron Mann's subsequent film "TWIST"-it is a cultural history of the Twist (dance crazy of early 60's).

Hank Ballard was deprived of fame with the Twist after Dick Clark heard his version of the song and assigned one of his stooges at Cameo-Parkway (Phila. record label) to do a cover version.

Starring former back-up singer whoMrs Dick Clark named "Chubby Checker" because she thought it would be a cuter name than "Ernie."

Also, her homage to "Fats Domino." In the wake of great success of "The Twist," lots of twist-king-wannabes changed their names with varying degrees of success, including Jumbo Chess and (my favorite) Pudgy Parcheesi. Go see "Twist," you will enjoy it, except the Canadians on this list, who will feel that Ron Mann has lost some of his essential Canadianism, the quality that makes "Poetry in Motion" such a weird viewing experience.

Just a note from-Kevin

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Re: Niedecker/Zukofsky

24 Oct 1995

Richard Caddel — the Durham poet, librarian, and Bunting man — had charged American readers with condescending to the hard rural life in Lorine Niedecker; this is Kevin, unhurried, answering for the defence.

the "place" where LN lived?

Please explain. Also, "unsupportable," "failing," "failure," "unwittingly."

It's like we are all bozoes except for you and your proposed sympathetic, unblinking reading of the place.

Think of us instead as little children, who aren't old enough to understand everything in the adult world, who indeed find pity in everything, but who have generous and loving hearts nevertheless and who are easily hurt and shocked by the cold adult eye.

Think of us reading LN and finding plenty of evidence that indeed she felt cramped, stifled, overworked, and marginalised by her position in society and in fact on the map of the US, evidence that supports a blinkered reading.

Please don't feel that American readers of LN are clowns who only prefer our own bourgeois lives to the life she led because we are selfish tourist type people. You know, Richard Caddel, that we are all tourists whirling around from place to place, even if we never leave our own little villages. The world still comes in through every crevice in our playrooms and leaves an inevitable residue of hurt and pain. When I read LN I find that the suffering and abjection so marvelously proposed, crystallized, redacted in her work is what holds me closest to it, not her solidarity with fellow citizens of whatever the town is where she was and how she was concerned about them. We do not think of her as "mute", on the contrary, she is still speaking in a way. Still her status as a poet not widely known in her own lifetime, in fact not so well read today, is kind of like a creepy experience of feeling the other, a shadow self, the uncanny.

Think of us as willing her into our own lives in whatever shape we can, and yet knowing that she of course has no knowledge of us, she in that regard is the blind blank uncomprehending blinkerered sphinx we try to read. Thanks for listening!
Yours-Kevin Killian

[illegible]

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Re: EPC.Live

8 Nov 1995

Loss Glazier kept Buffalo's Electronic Poetry Center; here he and Kevin try to fumble the list onto a live chat channel, in the internet's early and adhesive-tape days.

For Mac users, can't we just use the program Homer (rather than using telnet) and get on the undernet to join channel EPCLIVE? Dodie, Did you try this and it works? If so, we will go ahead and append this to our instructions ... Thanks! Loss

Loss,

Dodie and I just got on the undernet per the instructions Dodie gave to Eryque the other day, and lo and behold, we found the epclive channel, so it looks like the Homer method does indeed work. But, no one was on it, only the robot named "X." So, how do we know when people are going to get on it? Please publish this in your TV Guide listings.

Yours,

Kevin

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The account that signed itself dbkk belonged to Kevin and Dodie both, and the reader soon learns to tell them apart by ear. That first January it was largely Dodie's — chasing Renga software and Spicer's Martian across the new web while the list played its games.

1996

Kevin Spacey

21 Jan 1996

Chris Stroffolino had floated the idea of a Frank O'Hara movie; hand Kevin a casting question and he was never going to hand back only one name.

Chris Stroffolino wrote:

Hey, has anybody else noticed his resemblance to Frank?

*Is anybody interested in writing a screenplay about O'Hara et al?
One scene could act out a "terrestrial cuckoo"? But who would play Jane?
And would Kevin do it? Certainly the screenplay shouldn't be based
on the GOOCH book.....
cs.*

Yes, Spacey would be ideal for the "Frank O'Hara" story. But don't get me started. In half an hour I had the entire movie cast: I see Chris O'Donnell as Joe LeSueur, and Bill Pullman as the young John Ashbery. For Jane, who else but Jennifer Jason Leigh! Or maybe she would be better as V R ("Bunny") Lang, and Winona Ryder could play Jane. Stephen Dorff could play the seductive heartless

Bill Berkson that Gooch has imagined into being. If "they" could teach Brad Pitt to dance, he would be great as Vincent Warren. The frame story would have Brad in the present running around interviewing all these people in old makeup, and Brad could be Leonardo Di Caprio, except they'd have to dye his hair. Dodie suggests a heterosexual love interest for Brad—a rival researcher, perhaps—Julia Roberts, snappy reporter, with glasses, which she could take off at opportune moments.

Now for the other characters: the young James Schuyler: Crispin Glover. Helen Frankenthaler: Judy Davis. Larry Rivers: David Schwimmer (from TV's "Friends").

Leonardo di Caprio as James Dean, Angela Bassett (who else?) as Billie Holiday, Sharon Stone as Lana Turner.

So don't get me started, okay?

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Boys in space

24 Jan 1996

That December he had lectured at San Francisco State on Oppen and Heinlein; the list gave him room to set Oppen's outer space beside Spicer's, a subject he knew from the inside as Spicer's biographer.

Hi, it's Kevin Killian. Let me give me 2 cents about the differences I see between Oppen and Spicer and their use of space travel in their work. In December I gave a lecture at SF State about Oppen, which turned on GO's use of an epigraph from Heinlein in one of his books. The Oppens I guess were very taken by Heinlein—partly, I suppose, since s/f books were among the few unproscribed by the Party during their Mexican exile in the 50s, they were books which could be read with impunity, if we can believe Mary Oppen's memoir, "Meaning a Life." Spicer's s/f interests were very different, colored by his own personal terror of "outer space." He was as opposed to the space race as the women of Oppen's acquaintance: "I can't stand to see them shimmering in the impossible music of the Star Spangled Banner [...]. The poetry/ Of the absurd comes through San Francisco television. Directly connected with moon rockets./ If this is dictation, it is driving/ Me wild." Whether this poem (Ten Poems for Downbeat #5, "for Huntz") refers to the space program or to the concurrent WNET/Richard Moore series on American poets, there's an ambivalence here that I believe stems back from Spicer's early paranormal experience. When he was very young JS had a vision of a "murder in space." Apparently in a dream (but perhaps actually in what we would now call an experience of, yes, alien abduction[???) where is that Harvard guy who gives credence to these accounts!) Spicer saw someone killed before his eyes by

strange Martian space creatures in deep space, hence (?) his later preference for s/f on the darker side of Heinlein (tho' he did like "The Green Hills of Earth")-like his erstwhile roommate Philip K. Dick.

PS, in my Oppen talk I cited the "red globes" of his "Discrete Series" and called attention to the cult of Heinlein among spanking enthusiasts (Heinlein's novels startle with their hundreds of references to spanking: an obsessive, awkward, almost Bettie Page, frankness). This caused a bit of a stir.

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Re: primo bio

24 Jan 1996

Pierre Joris had praised two new literary lives, and the list was deep in a biography thread — a thread that touched Kevin closely, since he was writing one himself.

Two recent poets/writers bios I've found good to excellent (& most refreshing after the Clark/Olson disaster & the Gooch/O'Hara cocktail chatter) are the recent Polizotti book on Andre Breton (Revolution of the Mind) & Edmund White's bio of Jean Genet (which is superb indeed). Pierre

Dear Pierre and all, I have mixed feelings about both the Tom Clark and Brad Gooch books. I read a very good biography of Sarah Orne Jewett a few weeks ago. Also, expect great things of Carolyn Burke's forthcoming life of Mina Loy which she has been working on for, gee, I can't remember how long. Ten or twelve years?

-Kevin Killian

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Re: primo bio

24 Jan 1996

Asked to explain why Tom Clark's Olson biography was a "disaster," Kevin answered as one working biographer sizing up another's failures.

Larry Price/Burt Kimmelman wrote:

"forgive my ignorance. could you, briefly, if you have a moment to spare, say something about how the clark bio of olson is a disaster? backchannel is okay with me unless others are into this. burt" Pierre: Frontal exposure, please. Ron Silliman clucked over it recently as well. Since I'm currently going through it for the second time, I'd welcome the explicit caveats. Larry Price

You-all might be interested in reading the "Minutes of the Charles Olson Society" (here's the address-1104 Maple Street, Vancouver, BC V6J 3R6, Canada)-which gives through its many issues a page by page listing of every time Tom Clark got something wrong-a fascinating exercise. Clark's account of Olson's visits to Ezra Pound at St. Elizabeth's, for example, make CO seem like a middle-aged man on

the make, sucking up to an insane yet influential power broker. Obviously it's a relationship with great reverberations for poetic history, yet Clark makes it a late forties version of the awful Shakespeare plot in "My Own Private Idaho." I think Clark's revelations about Frances Boldereff are truly striking-whatever part she played in CO's thought-his secrecy, almost duplicity, about her, is very strange, and these revelations color the rest of the book. In general I think Clark isn't bad when writing about Olson's early career-there's a LOT of new information in the book. It's the later life that he stumbles on, but who doesn't? But then again the tone of the book is like Joe McGinnis' in "Fatal Vision," as though Clark started out by liking and admiring Olson, but the book reveals a gradual and complete hatred of his subject, and in every instance Olson is placed in an unflattering light, sometimes "unfairly." So it's not the the squeamish.

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Re: intro (new to list)

27 Jan 1996

A newcomer was hunting a Pat Reed book; Kevin knew the San Francisco small presses and their proprietors by heart, and where the copies were.

At 2:57 PM 1/27/96, Charles Smith wrote:

Gwyn: Cd you give info on Pat Reed's *Tangle Blue*? Who published it? Address? I always loved her writing & wasn't aware of any thing out rrecently... Charles

Hi Charles. A) I think actually it was Eryque Gleason who was talking about having liberated Pat Reed's book from the cardboard box at IIT. So you might ask him. B) Pat Reed has a new book out that just appeared yesterday, called "We Want to See your Tears Falling Down" (San Francisco: Literatura de Cordel, 1996). You will certainly enjoy it if you're a Reed fan. You might also check out the most recent issue of BLOO (Chicago), which features a large number of her new poems.

"Literatura de Cordel" is I think Eileen Corder's new bookmaking project, chapbooks of innovative writing by women, very handsome books, I've seen one other, called "Not of this World" by Bettina Rotenberg. Go Eileen!

Kevin Killian 1996

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Re: biographies...

31 Jan 1996

Joe Amato had raised Reynolds's new cultural life of Whitman; Kevin, a Smithtown boy, could not discuss Whitman for long without coming round to home.

Joe Amato wrote:

since this bio thread has surfaced: i have sitting next to my keyboard (to remind me that all is not pixel) david s. reynolds' new book on whitman, _walt whitman's america: a cultural biography_... wondering if anybody has spent any real time with it, and what all you may think of it?... i've delved in only in pieces, was surprised to find material on "the trouble" (whitman's alleged sodomy of a child and, by some accounts, subsequent tar & feathering)...

Gerrit Lansing told me this was by far the best book on Whitman so I scurried out to get it, but I have to disagree with GL (on this one point). I agree with Ed Foster (again, on just this one point) and, I think it was Geoffrey O'Brien in the NY Review of Books that Reynolds' book is fascinating and rich with cultural studies type pop ephemera but doesn't answer the question about how it came about that everyone who saw the same operas, perused the same body-building and evangelical tracts, went to the same bars, etc., etc., as Whitman didn't write Leaves of Grass.

Whitman also taught school in Smithtown (the tar and feathering I think happened in Southold), and in Smithtown his little one room school house is still preserved, right on Route 25A, thanks to the town fathers of the 1940s (actually a group of heroic minded town mothers). I'm from Smithtown and it is our biggest claim to fame, except that Leo G. Carroll ("Topper") lived there. And also it is the setting for the novel, "A Nest of Ninnies," by Ashbery and Schuyler, who passed through it once on a train. (In memory of this occasion, the poets who distributed Schuyler's ashes threw some of them out of the train as it passed through Smithtown several years ago.) Anyhow when I was young a boy from school-Brian Mulhern-and I broke into Whitman's school house and committed sodomy there in his honor. Kind of eerie but way fun. I'm sure others have similar anecdotes.

Kevin Killian

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The Hellfire Club

02 Feb 1996

A Peter Straub thriller had, improbably, dropped a Language poet into its plot; Kevin, an omnivore of genre fiction, could not resist reporting the sighting.

This is Kevin Killian speaking. I've been reading Peter Straub's new thriller, "The Hellfire Club." In it, for reasons too complicated to explain here, a serial killer on the run is forced to pose as a language poet and gets put on the spot, asked where he's "been published." In Avec, Conjunctions and Lingo. "Are you part of a community of poets?" "We Language poets like to get together at a nice little saloon called Gilhoolie's." "How would you define Language poetry?" "Exactly what it sounds like," Dart said, "Language, as much of it as possible."

If any of you knows Peter Straub's address please send it to me back-channel.
Thanks!

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Re: e=r=o=t=i=c

10 Feb 1996

Ray Davis had proposed a mock-erotic ranking of the modernist grandmothers; Kevin played along, briefly, with a film critic's eye.

At 1:49 PM 2/9/96, Ray Davis wrote:

| *Well, "Language Poets" sometimes seem easiest to define as those sprigs who shot from Getrude Stein rather than T. S. Eliot or Ezra Pound. Now who's the most erotic of those three grannies?*

Dear Ray, to me it's a toss-up, if "toss-up" can be applied to three choices. But T S Eliot is the Douglas Sirk of poetry. See you!

Kevin Killian

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Re: Pound translation

03 Mar 1996

Susan Schultz and Jerome Rothenberg had been discussing Hawaiian writers of pidgin; Kevin had just met the one he most wanted to add, fresh off a San Francisco reading.

| *There are some serious writers of pidgin in Hawai'i*

Hi, this is the real Kevin Killian.

Susan Schultz & Jerome Rothenberg, you 2 were talking about the Hawaiian writers of Pidgin English. Well have I got a name for you!!

Susan, you probably know all about this guy, R. Zamora Linmark. he came to San Francisco last week and I got to meet him after his reading. He is fantastic. He has a book out from Kaya Production called Rolling the R's. I have not been so impressed with a book in eternity. It's kind of a novel and all the characters are gay youngsters in a Filipino section of Hawaii during the late 70s, they are 10 or 12 years old and all of them want to be like the US stars they watch on TV-Farrah Fawcett, Scott Baio, Matt Dillon, Kate Jackson, Donna Summer etc. It has to be read to be believed. It was great to meet him and hear him read. Susan, you should arrange for him to come to your classes at the University where you teach. But you probably have already! He is also in new anthology "Premonitions." XXX
Kevin

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Trivia question about Henry James

04 Mar 1996

One of his characteristic all-points bulletins — a plot question flung at the list against a next-morning deadline, with a prize attached.

Hello gang, it's Kevin Killian again. I can't think of anybody to ask who would be sure to know, except Raymond Pettibon, and he's too far away, but I need to know the answer by tomorrow morning!!! It's about Henry James' Portrait of a Lady. What is the name of the man whom Isabel Archer marries; and b) what is his relation to that sinister Madame Merle, is she his sister, mistress, both or what? I forget. And I don't have a copy of the book in the house. I could probably download it from somewhere, but duh. Also what is the name of his daughter the one who's in the convent?

First person to write in gets a free copy of this month's issue of Mirage (Larry Kearney, Ed Morris Jr, Hoa Nguyen, Rosmarie Waldrop, cover by Claude Royet-Journoud).

Thank you everyone!!!

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SPT upcoming events

09 Mar 1996

Small Press Traffic was his beat; the flyer for a New College reading arrived wrapped, as his flyers often did, in a good long swatch of his own prose.

Small Press Traffic is presenting two exciting events in the next week or so= .

Kevin Killian and Tan Lin =46riday, March 15, 7:30 p.m. at the New College Theater 777 Valencia Street San Francisco \$5

Robert Glück & Carla Harryman Tuesday, March 19, 8 p.m. at New Langton Arts 1246 Folsom Street San Francisco \$5

Those hot lights, trained on one's skin, were like the great eyes of God the poet Jack Spicer wrote of in Imaginary Elegies. They see everything, even under the skin where your thoughts are. Your dirty little thoughts. You can take off all your clothes and pretend to be "naked," but you are still Kevin Killian from Smithtown Long Island, with all the petty details that denotes. And yet at the same time the heat made me feel languorous, forgetful, like Maria Montez at the top of some Aztec staircase -dangerous, as though there were nothing beyond the circle of white-no audience, no society, only oneself and the red or purple or black hard-on that floats magically to the level of one's lips. I suppose all actors must feel the same way in some part of being-that the camera's eye represents the eye of God,

which at the same time judges all and, threateningly, withholds all judgment till time turns off.

- from Kevin Killian's "Hot Lights"

The agents ('senders') numbered about forty and the tests included a number, a wild animal with a letter written over his head, two intersected coloured lines, a taste, a pain at some point on the hands or arm, the emotional experiences of a drowning man, and finally what a fireman feels like when he is rescuing a girl. All the stimuli were chose automatically by means of a machine. Listeners were informed of the general nature of the stimulus, whether it was an animal, a number, and so on.

There shall be with seraphim and cherubim, there also we shall meet with thousands and thousands of others that have gone before us to that place.

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[insert photo here] [insert photo here] [insert photo here]

- from Tan Lin's "100 Second Chances"

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Re: Ghost books

11 Mar 1996

Peter Quartermain had asked after books forever announced and never published; Kevin, keeper of the Spicer flame, knew exactly which promised titles still haunted the archive.

Peter Quartermain wrote:

| *Does anyone know of any other ghost titles, announced (or even promised)?*

Hi Peter . . . the 1st thing that popped into mind was the book by Dorothy L Sayers that her publishers kept announcing year after year, after she had quit writing detective stories, but she kept dangling this one last book at them season after season, called, "Thrones, Dominations." It was to her career what "Answered Prayers" was to Truman Capote's.

Okay, ghost books-probably hundreds (dozens?) of readers have wondered whatever became of Robin Blaser's book of "Astonishments," after his announcement of it twenty years ago at the end of Jack Spicer's "Collected Books." Peter, you are in as good a position as anyone to answer that question!! (There was also Stan's announcement-was it in 1970?-of the imminent publication of Spicer's "Vancouver Lectures.")

But both these books will appear I'm sure, years down the trail, and so do not possibly qualify as "ghost books"? XXX Kevin (Killian)

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Re: Jeanne McGahey

21 Mar 1996

Kevin thought he heard sarcasm in something Ron Silliman had said about rediscovering forgotten poets, and — gently, on the record — took him to task for it.

Dear Ron, I always find "tone" the most difficult thing to judge in e mail, and forgive me if I'm wrong but when you say, as you did in response to Ed Foster's Jeanne McGahey post, "I'm waiting for someone to rediscover Adelaide Crapsey," it sounds almost sarcastic. If so this is not *becoming* especially from you, the man who is always pissing and moaning about this or that poet having been "disappeared."

Say it ain't so Joe! Love, Kevin K.

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Re: Adelaide Crapsey

22 Mar 1996

Silliman had answered the rebuke, and graciously; this is Kevin making up on the spot, the whole quarrel a day old.

| *Adelaide Crapsey (1878-1914) died young*

Thnak you, Ron Silliman, for restoring my faith. Hey everyone, Ron's not such an ogre after all! Soory to doubt you for even a second! XXX Kevin K.

Mea culpa.

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Re: The Bay scene in 1950s

27 Mar 1996

The list was reconstructing the 1961 shooting of Thomas Parkinson at Berkeley; Kevin had interviewed Parkinson himself for the Spicer book and could correct the dates and the motive.

| *Parkinson at that time was a target for all sorts of right wing*

Regarding the shooting of Thomas Parkinson-I know a little bit!

Ed Foster is almost correct, but wrong to suppose that the gunman had no motive beyond "he was there." In addition, Jack Spicer didn't take over Parkinson's classes but merely helped Josephine Miles and others grade papers for him while he recuperated.

Michael Davidson pretty much hits the nail on the head but just places the date a little late. Ron Silliman's dating is too early.

Parkinson was shot in his office, January 18, 1961. The assailant proposed to open World War III by an assault on "liberals" in this, the still highly charged aftermath of the McCarthy era. He wounded Parkinson and killed a graduate student who happened to be conferring at the professor's desk. The killer was a student obsessed with anti-Communism and indeed believed Parkinson to be a communist since he had defended in the student newspaper the students Ron alludes to who participated in the famous sit-in at San Francisco City Hall. This is the incident that opens up the documentary of a few years back, "Berkeley in the Sixties" (and isn't the Parkinson incident featured in that film too?) Parkinson, who died four years ago, recounted the story to me and Lew Ellingham as we were interviewing him, in June of 1991, for our projected biography of Spicer, with heavy emphasis on the terrible waste of the young graduate student's life.

Hope this helps! -Kevin Killian

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Re: query abt stein/toklas

27 Mar 1996

A Stein thread had turned toward Maria Damon; Kevin offered the Stein-Laura Riding friendship and then, as he liked to, undercut his own theory.

| *Regarding Stein, David Antin used to read (or to suggest*

I'm thinking of the instructive friendship between Stein and Laura Riding . . . seems to me that part of their bonding (unusual for both women) was some kind of Jewish connection. Wasn't it Stein, who had visited there, who recommended Mallorca to Riding in the first place? And didn't she do so knowing Riding's desire for a kind of Old Testament Zion (I don't have the letters with me)-Mallorca as the place where the early Jewish mariners had established a homeland? Or maybe Emily is right and they were just these 2 American footloose geniuses who recognized each other neither as women nor Jews.-Kevin Killian, God, do I sound dumb today.

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Re: Spicer and art

01 Apr 1996

Michael Boughn hoped Kevin could name the book of Fran Herndon's Spicer collages; on the painters of Spicer's circle he was the person to ask.

Michael Boughn wrote:

I have a held a book by Fran Herndon consisting of collages she worked on with Spicer. They're marvelous. I can't remember the name of the book now. Perhaps

Kevin can help. If not, I'm sure it could be tracked down. As visual evocations of the spirit of Spicer's work, they're impeccable.

I haven't yet been able to find the name of the book of Fran Herndon's collages, but was reminded that she produced lithographs to accompany the poems in the Auerhahn edition of _Heads of the Town Up to the Aether_.

This is Kevin Killian speaking. The name of the Herndon book is "Everything as Expected," by James Herndon, who was then married to Fran Herndon, and who had gone to UC Berkeley and met Spicer there in the late forties. Spicer encouraged Fran, Jim's second wife, to send her children to day school (a rare move in the late fifties) and take up classes at the SF Art Institute, where she learned how to make lithographs. They then collaborated on the poems from "Homage to Creeley," which is the first part of Spicer's book "The Heads of the Town up to the Aether." "Homage to Creeley" was printed separately, without Herndon's lithos, and Spicer, dissatisfied, insisted that Auerhahn use her work to accompany his poems in the complete version of "Heads."

A few years later she began the collages Michael is talking about. During the 1986 Spicer Conference that Maria and others have recalled, Jim Herndon gave away for free to attendees the last remaining copies of his book "Everything as Expected," which is a detailed, kind of quirky, study of the Spicer/Herndon collaborations. (Dear Aaron Vidaver, that conference was actually called something like "Jack Spicer Conference/White Rabbit Symposium," and "Spicer in Context" was only the name of one of the particular panels.) Last summer, Scott Watson curated the show "In Search of Orpheus" to accompany the Blaser Conference, and included I think all of Herndon's lithographs from "Homage to Creeley" and many of the so-called "sports collages" of the slightly later period. Fran Herndon herself was in attendance. Well, they are stunning indeed. Dodie and I bought one of the lithos ("The Death of the Poet") and one of the collages ("Ghost Riders" IMHO the most beautiful) so, come on over everyone and check it out!

Herndon is very much a working artist today. If anyone is interested, back channel me for more details. She lives in San Francisco and is sometimes seen at poetry readings, vernissages, etc. She has been inestimably helpful to me and Lew Ellingham as we have been writing a biography of Jack Spicer, and helpful to many other scholars and writers too. Before her marriage, the poet Elizabeth Robinson lived with Fran, and after ER moved out, the poet George Albon moved in, and lives there today.

Hope this helps. -Kevin K.

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Re: malls

14 Apr 1996

A thread on malls gave Kevin his cue to recall Abigail Child's video soap opera shot on the escalators of a downtown mall — a San Francisco cast list disguised as film history.

| *A further use for malls: When I wanted to put together a collective*

This is Kevin Killian speaking. I remember a few years ago, here in San Francisco, the so-called "San Francisco Center" opened downtown on Market Street to great hoopla, mostly due to the never before seen circular escalators. Cleverly, the poet and filmmaker Abigail Child persuaded the property management firm to let her shoot some scenes for her then-current project, the video soap-opera "Swamp," on the escalators. She completely bamboozled them into thinking it was some swank "independent" Sundance type picture about relationships, swore it would be good publicity for Nordstroms etc. Ha ha ha!

"Swamp," written by Sarah Schulman, uses the conventions of TV soaps and twists them all about into these sodden hilarious heaps. In the near future, the US government has created a drainage ditch to separate California from Mexico to keep out illegal immigrants. The ditch, or swamp, has gotten out of control and now hovers directly south of San Francisco. Carla Harryman plays the director of Small Press Traffic, who is told by a sinister real estate (or intelligence) agent-George Kuchar-that the bookstore is to be demolished to make room for more swamp.

Carla has many other problems, including a stormy marriage to Thor (Steve Benson), a surly film critic, author of "The Look and the Glance versus the Peek and the Stare." He owes money to a local Latina waitress, played by Marga Gomez, who he has coerced into making local TV commercials for "Working Class Hero," the emporium for those who lack working class roots but want to pretend they have them (filmed on the circular escalators, and very Ophuls-esque).

Thor and Shelley (Harryman) visit his parents to try to beg money. His dad is played by Susie Bright, who also doubles in the role of Shelley's analyst. His mom is played by the late Tede Matthews, in this horrible frumpy drag that conceals a terrible menace. I play a celebrated conceptual artist, John Smith, whose specialty is rigging up steel beams and suspending them from the ceiling of Grand Central Station-computers time the supporting cables to snap whenever a saturation mass of homeless people underneath try to sleep. That's about all I remember right now . . . except that Tom Mandel was in it too and he and I had to wear unflattering pig snouts over our real noses and make sexist cracks about the lovely Marga Gomez. And also, Larry Ochs gets shot to death and people cheer since they now have a chance at a good apartment. (More of a New York joke than a SF joke I suppose.) And also, Carla gets into a romance with Aline

Mayer, who was playing a kind of Jean Seberg type of romantic revolutionary. Gee, I guess I've written enough about "Swamp," but everybody should see it.

-KK.

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Re: Live from the Duncan Conference

24 Apr 1996

Loss Glazier had been posting live from the Robert Duncan conference; Kevin wanted the report, and, as ever, the fashion notes to go with it.

| *I'd love to hear an updated update.*

Dear Loss, hope you continue your report on the Duncan Conference. What happened, and why? Please post full details on the event to this list, and then back channel me with what everyone was wearing, etc. Wish I had been there but if you were that's the next best thing. -Kevin Killian

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Oppen: magazine appearances

01 May 1996

He had lost the thread of a query about where George Oppen's early work had appeared, and came back with a single late citation and a shrug.

This is Kevin Killian. I lost the original thread of this discussion . . . but there's a contribution by George Oppen in "The Four Zoas" #3 (the "Too Insane" issue) in 1976. This citation is probably far too late to assist Burt Kimmelman or whoever it was who was asking. And besides he was asking if I remember right about earlier magazine appearances? Ach! Forget I ever spoke!

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Re: POETICS Digest - 8 May 1996 to 9 May 1996

10 May 1996

Charles Watts had clocked Billie Whitelaw in a new Jane Eyre; Kevin met the sighting with the full camp inventory of his repertory memory.

| *Re: Billie Whitelaw: as many of you may know, she's in the Zeffirelli version of Jane Eyre — she plays — Grace Poole! I only know that from the credits at the end of the picture; couldn't recognize her while she was on screen. Charles Watts* ██████████

This is Kevin Killian. I will never forget Billie Whitelaw in "Night Watch," the US-financed thriller made in London around 1975? or so? where she is the other woman Lawrence Harvey loves and so they both try to drive Elizabeth Taylor crazy, and Taylor wears the most insane nightdress you've ever seen . . . Billie

Whitelaw must have seen that dress and then buried herself up to the neck in sand in shock.

As for "Jane Eyre," any film that has Whitelaw, Plowright, Maria Schneider (!!!!), Elle Macpherson (????), and GERALDINE CHAPLIN all in it will be playing for years at our local camp theaters here in San Francisco, perhaps in a triple bill with "Showgirls" and "Valley of the Dolls."

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Re: death in L.A.

23 May 1996

Aldon Nielsen had weighed, sourly, a bluesman's obituary against a soap actor's; Kevin took the soap star's side, and meant every word of it.

This is Kevin Killian speaking.

Aldon N wrote I think rather dismissively about the death of John Berardino—

FYI2 — same _LA Times_ finally ran an article on the death, in Japan, of Johnny "Guitar" Watson — took 'em long enough — maybe they were shamed into by the obit. in New York — Watson was a central figure in LA music for decades. In contrast, the same paper had a next day article on the death of an actor from the cast of _General Hospital_ —

IMHO, Berardino was a great star and a figure of major cultural importance. Everyone knew he was in failing health and I'm sure the LA Times had a correspondent with very close connections to Cedar-Sinai where the stars die. He had to leave "General Hospital" in 1993 after thirty years, because he was sick. Soap opera fans and baseball fans all over the world are sad that he has died. Give him the dignity of his name now that he is dead. But Aldon, I understand why the disparity between the reportage of the two entertainers outrages you. Yet soap opera stars receive less respect even than the great guitar players of our day. Why is that? I think because their work is perceived as somehow effeminate, decadent, off the beat. Ephemeral. Unrelated to life.

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Come In Spinner!

23 May 1996

Another of his open questions to the list, this one aimed squarely at the Australians, about a book he was thinking of writing on.

This is Kevin Killian. This post is especially to our Australian and Kiwi correspondents, but please, I need help from all. Have any of you read "Come In Spinner!" by Dymphna Cusack & Florence James? I am thinking of writing about this book and would appreciate knowing if anyone knows of previous critical

studies. I don't want to say what everyone else has already said without knowing it (God, what a sentence, but I hope you know what I mean). Thanks to all. XXX
Kevin K.

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"Stone Marmalade"

02 Jun 1996

Rod Smith had ranked the play Kevin wrote with Leslie Scalapino high on a list of good books; Kevin turned the compliment, briskly, into a casting call.

Thank you, Rod Smith, for placing "Stone Marmalade" so high up (#2!) in your list of good current books. Now I, Kevin Killian, will bring you all backstage into the mysterious world of "Stone Marmalade," the play I wrote with Leslie Scalapino.

Here's what you do first: if you're not nearby Bridge Street Books, or any other bookstore that carries this item, order directly from publisher:

Singing Horse Press P O Box 40034 Philadelphia, PA 19106 USA [REDACTED]

It's only \$9.50 (US), plus add \$2.00 for shipping & handling.

Okay, now that THAT's out of the way, and you have your copies in hand, we (Leslie and I) you to play a part in this play when she and I give it this big staging at the San Francisco Art Institute in December. We are in desperate need of poets willing to don cow costumes and travel, submerged under swamp water except for your heads, for the two hours the play lasts. Stone Marmalade, set in Hell, is our version of the old Orpheus and Eurydice story, as seen through the filter of the thought of the Italian philosophy of Giorgio ("Language and Death") Agamben.

A year and a half ago, when this play was a work in progress, we put a little of it on at the Kootenay School in Vancouver. David Ayre was a handsome Orpheus, Charles Watts a quirky, puzzled Agamben, Catriona Strang was very striking as Julia Roberts, and Scott Watson and Susan Clark essayed the malicious, hungry neighbors of Hell. Lisa Robertson strode the stage in full Eurydice grandeur. Excellent work by all! Then this past spring I (Kevin) tried acting another scene from this play, at New College in San Francisco—playing Kathy, the assistant of Eurydice (did I mention that Eurydice is not only queen of hell, but also runs its airport duty-free shop—following Agamben's apercu that the modern day airport duty-free shop is a space outside of juridice?) . . . I was backed by two mighty Greek choruses, one of the Bacchantes (played by Renee Gladman, Carla Harryman, Hoa Nguyen, Alicia Wing) and one of a bunch of puzzled male neighbors (Anselm Berrigan, Edmund Berrigan and Dale Smith). I was like Maria Callas come back to life, only . . . younger I suppose, and I did not have to sing. A month

later I brought the same act to New York, at the Segue Foundation space, where Erin Courtney, Elizabeth Fodaski, Deirdre Kovac and Heather Ramsdell played the mad, vicious Bacchantes, and Bruce Andrews, Kevin Davies and Bill Luoma were testosterone personified as the neighbors. I have nothing but praise for all the above "performers."

However in December we need plenty of poets and painters capable of playing the sick, Georgia O'Keeffe-like, soaking wet cattle of hell who fill the inferno with low sick moos. And so report to the casting couch of me (Kevin Killian) or her (Leslie Scalapino) before December 1st, script in hand, available now from Singing Horse Press as above.

Thank you all!

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Re: Oppen Sesame

10 Jun 1996

The Orono conference on 1950s poetry was a week off, and Kevin — who loved nothing better than meeting his correspondents in the flesh — was going, name tag ready.

Hi, this is Kevin Killian. Yes, I am going to Orono Conference. Get there on Wednesday late and leave on Sunday, so I am hoping to meet a lot of list-servers who I have never laid eyes on, I'll be wearing a big name tag. I'm talking about Jack Spicer on the quote unquote "gay" panel, really bringing up the rear as it is in the very last possible slot. So, everybody please attend!!

Dodie Bellamy is coming too, and we are both curious about what all of you look like. Dodie will be doing the fashion reports just like she did at last year's Blaser Conference, so try to look your best. More later.

Thanks.

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Fashion Report, dateline Orono

25 Jun 1996

He had appointed himself, half in earnest, the conference's fashion correspondent — a beat Dodie had made famous at the Blaser conference the year before.

This is Kevin Killian speaking. I know I was assigned to write the fashion news of the Orono Conference, and Dodie Bellamy was going to assist, but I'm sorry, Loss . . . there's too little to report. This was not the event to send the designers of Milan and New York scurrying for another profession. Everybody looked okay, but the weather was too hot, then too cold, so what could we do? It was so cold I saw all these people formerly with good sense descend on the Student Union and

buy these terrible oversized sweatshirts and sweat pants, etc., then they wore them in public, and I couldn't blame them.

The only person who kept a style throughout was the mysterious Starr Black, who kept appearing in one variation after another of an essentialist Starr Blackness. Even if you didn't know her name, you know exactly who I'm talking about and the kind of Ralph Lauren meets Alexandra Neel outfits she wore. Those green mossy skirts and heather Fair Isle sweaters and the pins and cameras. As far as I'm concerned she was the fashion triumph of the week.

Runners-up: Roger Conover, resplendent in emerald green, his fringe of hair tied back a la Hal Robins from the Church of the Sub Genius; Nick Lawrence, dapper as a villain in an Edith Wharton novel; Sharon Thesen, who arrived in the middle of the night in a slinky cocktail number from Vicky Tiel.

Here's Mr. Blackwell's final category: The Fabulous Fashion Independents. This prize we award to two unidentified men seen one night at the dorm cash bar extravaganza animated in complementary patchwork madras-plaid jackets. Does anyone out there know **where** these jackets are popular or indeed manufactured? I want one! E.T. call home! Speaking of origin, does anybody know why those ethno-poetic guys all carry the same hippy bags? Jerome Rothenberg, you're on this list, did those bags come with a gamelan inside?

Fashion disaster? No question about it: the official conference T shirt which, I see, has already been alluded to several times in previous posts. On the front it says, you know, "National Poetry Foundation/conference/American Poetry of the 1950s/June 19-23, 1996/Orono Maine" and on the back it has a list of the twenty or so soi-disant "plenary speakers"-no, not a list, a constellation, for each name mounts or falls on its separate diagonal, all in this revoltingly un-designed plain serif typeface, italics galore. From the moment I saw those T-shirts neatly stacked on a long deal table, all folded in a variety of Maine colors-Martha Stewart colors-I knew I had to have one. When you see it you will rub your eyes thinking, "It had to happen!" Clever Bruce Campbell was spotted wearing a T-shirt from a previous conference, must have been on Pound, that said "Make It New" tempered with a line of bold Chinese ideograms.

More later on more "heady" topics.

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Jeremy Reed

25 Jun 1996

Handed a book to review by an English poet he did not know, Kevin did what he always did: asked the list, back channel welcome.

This is Kevin Killian speaking. Listen, I have to review a book "Bitter Blue" by Jeremy Reed, it says on the back of the book he is a British poet with 8 volumes of poetry. I wonder if any British pals on this list-serv can tell me anything about his poetry and or career or any strictly "back channel" information about, well, you know.

This book is a mixed genre account of his drug intoxication and also withdrawal and includes plenty of scoop on Anna Kavan as well.

Thanks in advance from,

An ignorant US reader

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General Report, dateline: Orono

27 Jun 1996

This is the long one — his full dispatch from Orono, the panels he loved and the biographers who moved him and the novelist he stalked across a hotel lobby. It is Kevin at conference length, which is to say at his happiest.

This is Kevin Killian speaking. Hope my previous fashion report didn't scare anyone off, but why else have there been so few reports from the Orono Conference? Anyhow, I thought of some more things to say.

I wasn't spending all my time gazing rapturously at the scenery. I actually did get to some panels, believe it or not. The most exciting one was the panel on Frank O'Hara, in which this fellow from Penn, whose name I did not write down, but who was very smart, spoke about O'Hara and Larry Rivers and one being the ventriloquist for the other and how 6 weeks in 1959 were quite jam packed ones for O'Hara, and either the best time of his life, or merely quite typical for any six weeks in his life. This talk made me get into the idea of trying to figure out which six weeks of my own life future critics will think was the most exciting, and I came to the conclusion that they hadn't occurred yet. Then Ben Friedlander spoke about O'Hara and the "race question," followed closely by Steven Evans on the same topic-they built up the panel, moment by moment, into this tremendously thrilling event like a horse race of ideas. Ben Friedlander can write up a storm. Every sentence he spoke was like a poem. Listening him speak I had the same feelings of awe with which I imagine Oscar Wilde would regard Lord Alfred Douglas in their early days of first knowing each other. I had simply never

thought of O'Hara's work in this light and now I am convinced. It was a stunning moment.

Dodie went to the panel where Joan Retallack rehearsed Jackson Mac Low's "Virginia Woolf Poems," a reading through *The Waves*. I was not there but heard plenty about this later and how great it was. Joel Kuszai gave a rare look at Jackson Mac Low's early career, long before Kuszai was born. Or Dodie either, practically speaking.

Amateur entertainment winners, Chris Stroffolino's barrelhouse piano with Alan Golding and Joe Donahue singing, or shrieking, Lou Reed's "Walk on the Wild Side," with Geoffrey O'Brien chirping in at the cue about "the colored girls sing." It was this terribly Frank O'Hara masquerade of values and atonality.

An Oscar to Rachel Blau Du Plessis's plenary talk about gender relations in the 1950s, esp. her daring use of John Wieners' later "Woman" as the exemplum of everything that went wrong with poetry's challenges as a result of the social stratification of the period. The room went deadly silent when she got to this part, a reaction I suppose to her daring to question the all-male cast of John Clarke's plan for the "Curriculum of the Soul." There, all of a sudden, en plein air, was this really weird fact that no one had ever, I suppose, tried to make sense of before. In this paper, Wieners came off very seedy, whereas in Michael Davidson's beautiful talk given on a previous evening, he was the culture hero I have admired for so many years.

Another plenary people were talking about was Alicia Ostriker's talk on Ginsberg and Lamentations. I saw men and women coming out the hall, heads shaking with admiration. I liked the Ann Charters talk a little, tho' I do not think she should have named it "Charles Olson/Ann Charters/Herman Melville." It just sounds silly.

The Niedecker panel I attended was very fine. Jenny Penberthy told us all about the "For Paul" poems, which she kept calling the "For Pauls," in my seat I was thinking, sounds like the Beatles. Those For Paul poems, JP kept saying, are Niedecker's worst poems and they are horrible (she said). Made me want to read them! How bad could they be? Susan Dunn's paper was good, too, tho' like most of us she bit off more than she could chew! And then Glenna Breslin spoke. Because I have been writing a biography, and because, as Chris Stroffolino noted earlier, this was kind of a personality-based conference, some of the very best papers were given by biographers, and this was one of them. Breslin went to Fort Atkinson or Blackhawk Island and tracked down this man, Aeneas McAllister, who had known Niedecker as a young handsome sensitive stud. "He was young, dark-haired, slim-hipped, with a sexy smile," said Breslin, studying a photo of

Aeneas, and I don't mind saying, I just about swooned. He and his family lived next to LN in 1954 . . . she was fifty, he was 27 . . . nature took its course . . . When Breslin's biography is published Hollywood should make a film of this chapter with Jessica Lange as Lorine Niedecker, and maybe Keanu Reeves as Aeneas, except I don't know if Keanu Reeves can play the piano, because one night Aeneas was playing Beethoven on the only piano on Blackhawk Island, and Lorine came to the door at midnight, tipsy, blonde, disheveled, and said, "You play?" Maybe in 1954 these parts could have been played—hell, WERE played—by Vivien Leigh and Marlon Brando. Aeneas also described to Glenna Breslin the visit of Louis, Celia and Paul Zukofsky to Wisconsin and how Lorine was subdued, and Aeneas took Paul on a kayak trip and Louis & Celia came running out of the cabin and started hollering, "Paul! Your hands! Your hands!" thereby spoiling the fun of the young boy prodigy violinist. Louis: Harry Dean Stanton. Celia: Kate Nelligan. Paul: Macaulay Culkin. Anyhow it was a great talk.

I didn't go to Sharon Thesen's talk but sure heard plenty about it, for she, Thesen, is writing the life of Frances Boldereff, the mysterious woman who befriended the youngish Charles Olson and influenced, understatement, Olson's thought. And who is still alive, in Illinois or somewhere.

I did go to Barrett's talk. (For me a great thing about the conference was its reunion aspect; I mean no one enjoys meeting strangers more than I do, but I certainly enjoyed seeing my homeboys Watten, Friedlander, Perelman, etc after long separation). At first I misunderstood the concept of "hailing." I thought Hailing, or Heyling, was some kind of contemporary of Althusser, and being "Heyl"ed was an affectionate diminutive. Now I see I was just plain dead wrong. Gee, do I feel dumb! Anyhow one woman got up from her seat and said, "There is no 'moment of incest,'" and also she thought that BW had committed a terrible wrong against all women and all conference attendees. It was very dramatic and kind of sweat-making. And this was because Barrett showed about thirty stills of the 50s model Betty Page, in provocative 50s poses, often nude or in sexy bondage outfits, meanwhile telling us with a more or less straight face that she, Page, was in charge of her destiny and in control of her own sexuality. I don't see why Page was freer from the objectifying gaze than any other photographed woman of the 1950s. She just looks like she's enjoying herself, she doesn't look terrified. So? However, the material about the elephant, the sardine can, the family photo album of televised images of Duke Ellington, and Joe McCarthy, put all this sex material into a certain context which made it all make sense, at least on a poetic level. But how else can Lacan be read, except as a great 1950s poet of the fractured thought and image?

Okay, so how about when I looked up from the cocktail party and crossing the room, seeming to head exactly in my direction, I saw Stephen King, and my heart stood still, but luckily circulation restored quickly and I got out my pen and copies of two of his books and pestered Burton Hatlen until he introduced us! I didn't want to say, "Mr King, I'm your greatest fan," because of the way Kathy Bates had made that innocent enough and very true line into some kind of evil meconnaissance of obeisance in the film of King's own book, "Misery." So I just, like, kowtowed and tried to hold my own with Steve, as I call him now. You know, one on one, I'm a novelist, you're a novelist—that kind of thing. Smooth as silk. Lucky the van driver who picked us up from the airport had hinted he might be coming to this banquet, and so, while everyone else was seeing the scenic glories of Bar Harbor, I sneaked into the local bookstore and bought these books, so I could say, "Oh, wow, I was just reading this on the plane" (a white lie if ever I spoke one—or, a premonition, since I did read them on the way home!) But I must have been a nightmare to him. There he was trying to eat his lobster and I came up, dragging Dodie, and said to Steve, "Now that you've signed my book, we're friends and here is Loss and he can take our picture all together!" Then later he was trying to hobnob with Diane and Jerome Rothenberg, and this time I dragged Peter O'Leary with me as I said, "Look, Steve, I found another book by you that you haven't autographed!" The sickly grin on his face turned white, then purple, like a cicatrix, but he obliged. Everyone else at the entire conference acted like this happened to them every day, as though daily they were always rubbing elbows with the most talented thriller writer of all time. Well, I don't think so and I'll be the first to say so.

I am sure I am leaving a lot out, but one more thing I wanted to say was, a) it was great meeting all my net pals face to face, and b) thank you to all who helped me get through the ordeal of my own paper. I couldn't really think while I was there, I was so fretful, like the White Rabbit in Alice, always feeling I was running late, and indeed I was, but everything was all right on the night, altho' who would have thought that my 7 page paper was far too long for the 20 minutes I had to cram it all in, but I think I made too many jokes to try to alleviate for all the terror my subject inspired in me, the misogyny and sexual anxiety of Jack Spicer, and the Frankenstein-like stitches that hold together his 1958 poem, "For Joe."

I'm leaving so much out. I just wanted to write some of it down before my memory takes it away from me, like a message in a bottle that might float back to California someday. I had a great time, wish you were there!

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my stack

01 Jul 1996

William Northcutt had started a what-are-you-reading thread; Kevin's stack, as always, ran from Spicer research to Stephen King without so much as changing gears.

William Northcutt, you had a good idea. Here's what I've been reading.

1. Bitter Blue by Jeremy Reed. Incidentally, thanks to all who backchannel me with info on Reed, especially Pierre Joris, Ira Lightman, Joel Lewis, Romana Huk, and Ken Edwards.
2. Portrait of a Lady by Henry James.
3. Autotoxaemia by Latif Harris. About six weeks ago Eddy Berrigan was looking for a job here in San Francisco and told me he went into this one store & the owner gave him a test, and it turned out it was the "questionnaire" Jack Spicer asked his students to fill out to apply to his 1957 "Magic" Workshop (it's printed in the back of the "Collected Books" of Spicer). Following up I went into the store and demanded to see the owner. That's how I met Latif Harris, and he gave me one of his books. Turns out he is the missing witness I've been seeking for all these years, the man who drove Jack Spicer to his last poetry reading at the Berkeley Conference (1965) and had the nerve to bundle him up in the car with the man JS hated, Lew Welch. P.S., good book! PSS>, Eddy did not get the job!
4. The Green Mile, by Stephen King. One of Steve's best.
5. Abigail Child, "Scatter Matrix." Thanks to the people at Segue for sending this to me (or was it to Small Press Traffic????)
6. "Heart of the Breath," by Jim Brodey. I'm supposed to write a review of this one, and it is so long. (Quite a bargain.)
7. "The Prince, the Showgirl and Me," by Colin Clark. At age 19 Colin Clark was the 3rd assistant director on the set of the Olivier/Marilyn Monroe film "The Prince and the Showgirl." This is his diary of the period.
8. "Sunshine Muse," by Peter Plagens (1974). Out of date by lots, but an interesting art history of California during the Cold War. Who was it recommended this book to me as a good place to get more information about Jay De Feo, the San Francisco painter whose life I am dramatizing as we speak?
9. From Outlaw to Classic, by Alan Golding. I have read this book before, but I wanted to read it again to see if I have anything to add to Golding's Laws of Canon Formation.
10. Angry Women in Rock, ed. Andrea Juno, this is the first book of a new press formed by one of the editors of the defunct ReSEARCH.

11. Learned and Leaved: a Tribute to Rosalie Moore-Moore was one of the Bay Area activist poets, like Lawrence Hart, whose death a few months ago inspired a bit of discussion here on this list. These Activist people really had a program, didn't they? A program, and a destiny. Alan Golding, how do they fit in to your ideas about Canon Formation?

—Kevin Killian

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Re: white rose

12 Jul 1996

A Jay DeFeo thread prompted Kevin to announce the play he was building around her life; the casting, as usual, was the whole pleasure of the telling.

| *the film about Jay deFeo's "White Rose" was done by Bruce Conner.*

Hello everyone, it's Kevin Killian. Maria, your post (and the post of Charles Smith) about Jay de Feo inspired me to tell y'all a little bit about my new play. When the Beat Culture show comes to SF, I hope all of you who are in town for the opening can come to see my play, "Wet Paint" which Bill Berkson has asked me to stage at the SF Art Institute. This play will be the life of Jay De Feo.

Yes, I have rounded up an all-star cast to act out the different parts. Phoebe Gloeckner will have the main part, Jay De Feo, a feminist artist working in the heyday of the North Beach beat bohemia. Norma Cole will be playing Kay De Feo, her unruly twin sister, who spoils Jay's life by sneaking into her studio at night and adding yet more paint to her "Rose" picture. Leslie Scalapino and Jonathan Hammer will be playing representatives of Hallmark Cards, who have commissioned "The Rose" as a tiny little cameo piece. They like everyone else are annoyed at how large it's getting, and Jay really has no explanation. Rex Ray will be Bruce Conner. Tosh Berman, you will be glad to know that your father, Wallace Berman, will be portrayed on stage too. They were all part of the scene for sure. Let's see what else happened. I called up Michael McClure and asked him to play himself as a young man. He demurred, gee, I wonder why! He said he was too overbooked, but sympathized with my dilemma—who on the current scene is handsome, studly, sexy enough to play the young Michael McClure? (Suggestions, please). I thought it would be a great coup de theatre, all the characters would be standing around saying things like, "Hey, what's Michael McClure been up to lately?" and then he (the real Michael) would come out in those leather pants he invented. But alas, someone else will have to fill those well-worn leathers.

I'm especially glad to announce that Rebecca Solnit will be acting in my play. I hope you all know Solnit's book "Secret Exhibition: Six California Artists of the

Cold War," which is really a great book about De Feo, Jess, Conner, W. Berman, George Herms and Wally Hedrick. She will be playing Frida Kahlo, and Cliff Hengst will "be" Diego Rivera. Margaret Crane will be Jay's psychiatrist, unconvinced that she really has a twin sister who is ruining her life. Scott Hewicker will play Tuesday Weld, one of the outlaw Hollywood crowd who made North Beach a kind of Hollywood North in the late 1950s, and D-L Alvarez will be the very young Janis Joplin, drawn to "The Rose" as a kind of avatar of meaning of her own confused life. There will be plenty of other parts too, so come on everybody, bring your bongos and your collage vision of California junk/funk assemblage and buy a ticket today, or be in it! Needless to say this will be yet another benefit for Small Press Traffic! Thanks!

Kevin K.

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A plea for Ginny

21 Jul 1996

A magazine had printed an interview with Allen Ginsberg full of transcription howlers — Genet turned into "Ginny," Antler into "Ann Tyler." Kevin read the errors as comedy and could not keep the best ones to himself.

This is Kevin Killian speaking. I know y'all are busy watching the Olympics and too busy to have yet read the new issue of Minneapolis' "James White Review," which features a new interview with Allen Ginsberg. The interviewers spoke to AG over a speakerphone and had more than the usual trouble transcribing the tapes afterwards, I thought I'd share a few good ones with you:

Who are the good poets of today?

AG: Eileen Myles, Sharon Mesmer, Bono (from U2) , Andy Clausen, and Ann Tyler.

[I have racked my brains to think who "Ann Tyler" could be, but Dodie figured out it must be "Antler," who AG has named for the last 25 years when asked for his favorite poets of today.]

Can you comment on other influences on the Beats?

AG: One of my mentors was William Carlos Williams. I also knew Ezra Pound. We had many connections with the daddies of the past. And the mommies, because when I worked back in the 50s, I sent books to Marianne Moore, and connected with a lot of the womenfolk that were not so well-known-like Marine Heidegger.

[Marine Heidegger, of Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin.]

Tell us a little about Naropa.

AG: West Coast poets Philip Whalen, Gary Snyder, Michael McClure, and Robert Duncan could come and cross paths with Paul Orlovski, Sid Corman, Creeley, John Ashbery, Kenneth Cope, Sharon Holmes and me. About a month ago we did a big, big benefit with Patti Smith and Annie Kay (her guitarist) in Hale Auditorium.

Why is the Beat Generation now of interest to younger people?

AG: The sexual, spiritual liberation, liberation of the word, and the private poetic candor, which actually got us in trouble with the law. We had to overcome the legal trials for 57 to 62, which liberated Henry Miller, Burroughs, Ginny, myself, and everyone like that. The word was liberated.

[Ginny: "Thief's Journal," "Our Lady of the Flowers," "Flowers by Ginny"]

AG: There was the association with the psychedelic world, as well as the whole Eastern meditative world; the old European surrealist world; and the old homemade Americanist Williams, Morrison and Heartly world.

[Context is everything and I believe that AG is referring to the homemade W.C. Williams/Marsden Hartley world.]

What kind of advice would you give to a young poet today just starting out?

AG: Recognize the vast consciousness you already have. Then, if possible, read a lot of Burroughs, Kerouac, Corso, Ginny, and Rimbaud. Maybe get that big book by Pierre Joris and Jerome Rothenberg of international writing. Poems for the Millenium, University of California Press. It's a big, thick, thousand-page book of world poetry.

[Pierre and Jerome, I hope you are including plenty of Ginny's work in Vol 2 of your anthology. Young poets must learn! Have a heart!]

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Through the late summer the shared account was mostly Dodie's — conference quarrels, spam, a rumor that ten poets had seceded to a list of their own — and Kevin stayed off it. He came back in September for a hard reason: a death.

Dan Davidson

08 Sep 1996

Daniel Davidson, a San Francisco poet close to them both, had died by his own hand after years of pain. The notice comes in both their voices, Dodie's and Kevin's in turn, which is how the grief arrived.

We have some sad news to deliver. San Francisco poet Daniel Davidson died Saturday night, apparently by his own hand, after many years of pain following

open heart surgery. Details are sketchy at this point, but more detailed obituaries will follow.

I (Dodie) met Dan in the mid-80s (actually got to know him, since I'd seen him around) at the UCSF medical center where I was a temp secretary and he was coming frequently for follow-up for his heart surgery. He and I spend many an evening together discussing writing, living, music, art (and drugs). We were both avid about Messiaen's "Quartet for the End of Time" and sometimes we'd shut up long enough to listen to it at his apartment on Haight Street. I've never seen anyone live more grandly on a fixed income than Dan—he was amazing. Bringing home castoff clothing from the Salvation Army, dyeing them black, and cutting such a dashing figure. At that time Dan hadn't published much, but shortly afterward he became an important figure in the Bay Area writing scene, writing, giving readings, curating series. He taught an after-school program for small children at Small Press Traffic when it was still on 24th Street.

I (Kevin) remember Dan always in the audience at every kind of poetry reading you could imagine, always with his own determined take on things. Perhaps because he came to poetry late, he was burning up with poetry fever, and he could be exhausting in his naked need to know more. And because he had this plastic heart valve he often thought of himself as not having much time. He was generous to a wide variety of young writers and attentive to his elders. I was glad to be able to write a "blurb" for his first book "Product." In recent years I didn't see him around much. Couldn't figure it out. The last reading I saw him give was with Bob Perelman at New Langton Arts, and when was that? At least 2 years ago. He shied away from all the events he used to shine at. Last month when Anselm Berrigan and Katie Lederer left for parts East, Dan came to the party for them—still Byronic, still dashing, but gray, gray.... and he and I talked then about this and that. God! The ironic thing is that he was scheduled to participate in the "Proliferation 3" reading Dodie and Mary Burger are holding at Small Press Traffic this coming Friday (the 13th). And now their plans are to make it into some kind of memorial in his honor, I guess.

Sorry to fill up the bandwidth with all this info about Dan and us, but as you can see, we have the kind of grief that's hard to take hold of and make sense of—a grief not unmixed with guilt. I know that the book Dan wrote with Tom Mandel is coming out soon, the collaboration from Poets and Potes Press of which he was so pleased and so proud. That's something, tho' right now I don't know what.

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Tom Field show opens in San Francisco

18 Sep 1996

The painter Tom Field — a Black Mountain man who became Spicer's favorite — had been dead a year; Kevin wanted the list to see the first real show of his work.

Hi, it's Kevin Killian. I hope all of you on this list who live here in San Francisco (or anyone who plans to visit here within the next 6 weeks or so) will get the chance to see this wonderful show which opens tomorrow. It's called "Paintings from Black Mountain College and the Beat Era," it's the first large show of the work of the late Tom Field, who died here a year ago, and this is the address: 871 Fine Arts, 49 Geary Street, San Francisco.

Tom Field was born in 1930, went to Black Mountain College (there's a great story in Martin Duberman's book about the time he tried to run down Robert Creeley in a car), met Robert Duncan and Jess there @ 1956, and came to San Francisco when the College closed in 1957. In San Francisco he joined a host of other "Mountaineers" including Joe Dunn, John Wieners, Basil King, etc., etc. and began work as a merchant mariner, shipping out and shipping in, a sailor's life, blah blah blah. While on land he produced in short order at least a dozen large A-E type magnificent paintings and became Jack Spicer's favorite painter. For a while he lived in the famous East-West House where he met Joanne Kyger, Lew Welch, Jack Kerouac, Lenore Kandel and so forth (in Kerouac's novel "Big Sur" he appears under the name "Lanny Meadows," not so imaginative I suppose). Last year he died there @ 65.

Robin Blaser has written the essay that accompanies this show, which gathers together for the first time most of the great pictures from the late fifties and early sixties, drawn from a variety of private collections (Kyger, Jess, Fran Herndon, Ernie Edwards, etc). I sneaked in to the gallery last Saturday, while the Rauschenberg show was still up, and saw the Field pictures leaning against the walls, not hung yet, and I was blown away. If there's any justice this exhibition should re-write Bay Area art history...it's miles better than SFMOMA's overhyped "Abstract Expressionists of San Francisco" show which is running concurrently. Come on down! Tell me what you think. The reception is tomorrow (Thursday) between 5:30 and 7:30--California time, so you could probably show up Saturday and the reception would still be going on. Thanks everyone!

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Hope you all can come to my play

06 Oct 1996

The opening of his DeFeo play at last — and folded into the notice, the tale of Bruce Conner's lawyers, who objected to being honored on stage.

Hi everyone, this is Kevin Killian.

If any of you are going to be in the Bay Area on Wednesday (October 9) (and I know many of you will be), then please come to my play, "Wet Paint," which Small Press Traffic is presenting in collaboration with the San Francisco Art Institute, in conjunction with the "Beat Culture and the New America" show which has just opened here in S.F.

It's on Wednesday, October 9, 7:30 p.m. at the San Francisco Art Institute Lecture Hall (800 Chestnut Street at Jones Street, SF) a block up from Columbus. And cheap! It is only \$6 to get in (four dollars if you are a student or a member of Small Press Traffic. And if you attend the Art Institute you get in free.

One woman . . . Jay DeFeo . . . walking a perilous tightrope between obscurity and fame in the late 1950s. The brilliant romantic artist, taunted by sister Kay de Feo, a mind so vicious she sneaks in night after night to dash more paint on Jay's finished production. Jay, woman, rebel, artist, haunted by a shoplifting arrest in her past, and puzzled by how dark her apartment seems to be getting. And the men in her life, the _cute guys_ who made North Beach a bongodelia of high art and Beat esteem—Bruce Conner, Wallace Berman, Michael McClure, Wally Hedrick, Kenneth Anger. And the visitors from Mexico, who dared Jay De Feo to her masterpiece *por chevre*—Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera! Her shady psychiatrist, pressuring her to abandon feminist art work and return to Hallmark sell-out. The Hollywood starlet who came to the Fillmore to study up for an important role—Tuesday Weld. And Janis Joplin, the woman who worshipped Jay and inspired ³The Rose.²

"They invented a new kind of art . . . and a new kind of SEX to go with it!" Starring D-L Alvarez, David Buuck, Ethel Chase, Norma Cole, Margaret Crane, Kate Delos, Kathi Georges, Phoebe Gloeckner, Craig Goodman, Jonathan Hammer, Clifford Hengst, Scott Hewicker, Caitlin Mitchell-Dayton, Karla Milosevich, Rex Ray, Michelle Rollman, Leslie Scalapino, Wayne Smith and Alicia Wing.

Actually, the play will have no reference to the artist (and former iconoclast) Bruce Conner, whose attorneys wrote to me very sternly shortly after the publicity began to unfold about my play. They claimed they had an advance copy of my play (wrong! I just finished it yesterday!) and that under no circumstance was I to use his a) name b) image or c) likeness in what he calls a "frivolous exploitation" of his work. I wanted to hire a lawyer of my own, to accuse him of

prior restraint, etc., —but decided not to, it's supposed to be fun. So come on down and help me pay tribute to a great artist, Jay DeFeo, and the California funk assemblage movement in general. Thanks for your bandwidth everyone.

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Re: Jay and Kay deFeo

12 Oct 1996

Maria Damon asked for the review; Kevin obliged with a full account of the audience, which for him was always half the event.

| Hey there, dbkk, are we going to get a report on Kevin's play? breathless, maria d

Maria, thanks for asking about my play, "Wet Paint," which indeed did get finished, still wet, and presented on Wednesday. All the actors<a motley crew of the Bay Area's best painters, filmmakers, poets, videographers, drag performers, art writers, and novelists<showed up, which was such a help, and so difficult corralling 19 divas all in one room at one time. And some of them are the kind who, presented with a script, will whip out rulers to determine how many inches they have (of dialogue, of course). But they were all there and all fantastic.

I could try to reconstruct the audience a la Jordan Davis, but I was too nervous really to note more than a few of the hundreds of people who were there. I remember however Fanny Howe coming up to me after the show was over and saying that it reminded her of growing up in Cambridge when her mother, Mary Manning Howe, was in charge of the Poets Theater there (mid-fifties?), and nothing could have pleased me more.

Also spotted: the writers Rebecca Solnit, Tina Rotenberg, Jocelyn Saidenberg, Matthew Stadler, Renee Gladman, Michael Price, Avery Burns, Leslie Davis, Pamela Lu, Barbara Guest, Susan Gevirtz, Laura Moriarty, Brian Strang, Aaron Shurin, Charlie Smith, Rena Rosenwasser, Duncan McNaughton, Bill Berkson, Larry Kearney, Jay Schwartz, Lauren Gudath, George Albon (replete with new, utterly delicious new boyfriend), and the artists Brett Reichman, Fran Herndon, Chris Komater, Peter Mitchell-Dayton, Vincent Fecteau, Jennifer Locke, Nao Bustamente....

And many more both on this list and not. Tosh Berman, you will be glad I know to hear that each of *your* appearances was greeted with a tremendous round of applause. You were played by a Cabbage Patch doll that Dodie bought at our local Thrift Town—actually, a Cabbage Patch knockoff, and carted around in a simply, 1959 style brown paper bag. At one point in the action of the play, you wander away and get sucked into the vast 2000 pound "Rose" painting of Jay DeFeo, but happily rescued by your good father. More later. Thanks<Kevin K.

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Steve Carll reading

13 Oct 1996

A reading at the salon on Page Street, reported in the salon's own spirit — Kevin always liked the small rooms best.

Hi, it's Kevin Killian. Thanks, Steve, for announcing your reading over the internet. I'm back and I'm glad I went. As usual the reading started over 2 hours late, but "on time" for other readings that I've attended there at 530 Page Street. Everyone was in a party mood and that's exactly what they got. First Edmund Berrigan read—a selection of poems from all different manuscripts, leading up to the new work, a series of prose poems in which he has finally escaped from the autobiographical this and that allusion trap of his previous oeuvre. Well done, Edmund. Then I saw some big strong men moving around an elaborate stereo system and realized we were in for a multi-media presentation by Steve Carll. He put on a record and announced that since he wrote to music, it seemed possible to try to reproduce those conditions while reading. I think the record was by Alice Coltrane and Pharaoh Sanders. Over this melange of sound Steve read excerpts from his two new books, "Sincerity Loops" and "trace a moment's closure for clues," for about twenty five minutes, then the music stopped and he read some short funny essays on "Drugs" Caffeine, television, ecstasy, morphine, crack and alcohol are some I remember. Everyone was in stitches or if not stitches in knits and purls. Long live the salon, where there's an intimacy that sometimes more suited towards sharing new work than in the big spaces in town here. Now how can I get funding for having people over at my apartment? Does funding = theater?

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Re: student sincerity

14 Oct 1996

Told that bad poetry can still make its author a fortune, Kevin answered with a single dry question.

At 1:23 PM 10/14/96, Pritchett,Pat @Silverplume wrote:

Bad student poetry it may be (personally I never liked this song), but she -Natalie Merchant - and they - 10,000 Maniacs - have made a fortune from it.

So you would say, "Keep doing this—if you don't win a Nobel Prize, it will make you rich some day?"

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Re: defensiveness as prop?

22 Oct 1996

A thread on pop lyricism — Morrissey, Scott Walker — gave Kevin his opening, and he came down, predictably, for the older Walker Brothers records and the Bacharach songs.

To all of you who have been talking about Scott Walker, hooray for "Tilt" and so forth, but my favorites are still the Walker Brothers records, especially the Burt Bacharach-Hal David numbers. Wayne Smith and I wrote a play about a year ago and used Scott's version of "The Windows of the World" throughout. (It was a play about window dressers who dream of achieving fame as fine artists, so it "fit" kind of. Now I undersand there is a whole CD mined from the London archive of Scott Walker singing Burt Bacharach including one duet with my other favorite Dusty Springfield. Al Nielsen is right, Scott is the sexiest man in the world, and George Bowering, you probably did hear the Walker Brothers at least once upon a time, they had the #1 hit on the world charts at just about the same time you were writing your great poem "Brown Globe." ("You poets out there, if you still read words,/ Try to say something to me....")

Thanks! —Kevin Killian

Never understood the (lack of real) relations between poetic and p(r)op lyricism, but was compelled to use a Stephen Morrissey (from the great days of the Smiths) utensil at the head of a forthcoming collection: so I broke into the palace with a sponge and a rusty spanner... There's a lot I'd be happy to read/recite(/sing?) from (Smiths-era) Morrissey, in any company. And what about the Scott Walker of 'Climate of Hunter' and 'Tilt'? What do 'we' think of that? - - - - > John Cayley Wellsweep Press [in Chinese HZ:] ^ innovative literary translation from Chinese ^ 1 Grove End House 150 Highgate Road London NW5 1PD UK Tel & Fax: 0171-267 3525 Email: [redacted] <http://www.demon.co.uk/eastfield/> < - - - -

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San Francisco Events this week that I know about

11 Nov 1996

A week of San Francisco poetry, catalogued host by host — the Queer Beats Conference among them, which he had helped organize with Bruce Boone, Bob Glück and Aaron Shurin.

This is Kevin Killian. Hi everyone. Hope you're in San Francisco this week. Let me tell you about some events I know about here this week. =46irst of course I hope you can come to *my* reading, it'll be great, at Modern Times Bookstore on Thursday at 7:30. Modern Times is at 888 Valencia Street. I'm reading with Linda Smukler who's here from upstate New York reading from her new book "Home in Three Days. Don't Wash" (Hard Press). Hooray for Linda and too bad for me, *my* book was supposed to be ready by now but it's been delayed a week or so. More about this *epochal* event later when I have the book in my hands. Okay, so, see you on Thursday!

On Friday you already know about the "Premonitions" event at Small Press Traffic at 7:30 at New College (777 Valencia). You already know that Walter K. Lew, the editor of "Premonitions" will be here, together with Bay Area contributors Myung Mi Kim, Celine Salazar Parrenas and Ronald Tanaka. But luckily a 4th contributor has stepped forward to add to the lineup: Oakland's Patricia Ikeda-Nash, author of the now out-of-print volume of poems *House of Wood, House of Salt* and other wonderful works, such as the "Zen Laundry" excerpt from her memoir-in-progress about life in Korean Buddhist monasteries, published in *Mu*. So don't miss this reading!

Then on Sunday, November 17th, the long awaited "Queer Beats Conference" takes place at the Lecture Hall of the San Francisco Art Institute. This conference was organized by Bruce Boone, Bob Gluck, Jonathan Katz, Aaron Shurin and . . . me! It's presented by the Harvey Milk Institute in conjunction with several other co-sponsors, including the Poetry Center at SF State. It's an all-day conference from 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Here's the phone number for more information [REDACTED]. But I can give you a rundown of what to expect, oh, and it costs \$15-\$20. 10:30 a.m., introductory remarks by Jonathan Katz. Then "Beat Erotics" panel moderated by Aaron Shurin, with Bruce Boone, Earl Jackson, Jr., Lenore Kandel and Steve Silberman. 12:30-1:30 lunch. Then at 1:30 another panel, I think it's called "Queer Identity" with Michael Davidson, Mark Ewert and Ricardo Ortiz, moderated by . . . me! Then at 3:00 p.m. "Beat Circles" panel with Maria Damon, Harold Norse and Scott Watson, moderated by Bob Gluck. I don't have the synopses of these talks in front of me but I remember some of them... Steve Silberman (yes, the famous authority on Jerry Garcia and the Dead) will be speaking about Philip Whalen and his first book of poetry, published quickly, then suppressed due to its high homoerotic quotient. Bruce Boone will be talking about dirt. Lenore Kandel will be making a rare appearance I think to talk about the censorship of her book "The Love Book" and I hope to talk about making "Lucifer Rising" with Kenneth Anger. She is fantastic and a living legend and hardly ever seen, ever! I don't know what Earl's talking about but he teaches at UC Santa Cruz and has written a great book "Strategies of Deviance: Studies in Gay Male Representation." He and Bruce are the high theory guys on THAT panel. On the second panel Michael Davidson will speak on . . . ??? I forget! But I'm sure it's something brilliant about the Cold War. Mark Ewert, a young writer and filmmaker, will speak about his intimate relations with octogenarian William S. Burroughs. Ricardo Ortiz will discuss John Rechy and why/how he was systematically excluded from cultural histories of the Beat movement. The final panel stars our own Maria Damon from the poetics list (she will talk about Bob Kaufman and gay influence, etc., I think; Harold Norse, another living legend from the original Beat Circles of New York, Tangier, Paris and London; and Scott

Watson, a curator from UBC who will present slides of paintings and other graphic work created by 50's/60's artists whom, for one reason or another, mostly homophobic ones, were excluded from the Whitney's "Beat Culture and the New America" show now playing in San Francisco . . . Charming event. Hope to see you all on Thursday, Friday and Sunday. More later and excuse the long bandwidth of this message... or is it wide bandwidth?

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Re: M/M & westerns, deah

30 Nov 1996

A movie thread on westerns gave Kevin the floor to defend George Roy Hill and, while he was at it, rewrite the credits on Once Upon a Time in the West.

At 10:36 AM 11/30/96, Pritchett,Pat @Silverplume wrote:

As for Wyatt Earp, I'd take "Tombstone" over the Costner pic any day. [...] though the film is fairly authentic in all the details in the end it seemed nothing but details - I found it unbearably tedious. [...] George Roy Hill got all the credit for the famous cliff jumping scene [in "Butch Cassidy"] that was taken shot for shot from Henry Hathaway's much better 1939 "Jesse James" with Hank Fonda & Tyrone Power. [...] Hill hardly strikes me as the postmodernist type (though his "Slaughterhouse 5" is quite good).

Pat, this is Kevin Killian. You are right about "Wyatt Earp" with Kevin Costner but about George Roy Hill you are tragically wrong!

He after all is the man who made "Thoroughly Modern Millie," not a western, but an *unmutilated masterpiece* on the order of Welles' "Citizen Kane," however, many do not care for it at all, or so I've found. But what it does not say about gender relations, modernism and post modernism no one in the last 30 years has said either. Robert van Hallberg, you should be planning a special issue (double issue) of "M/M" around this film's upcoming 30th anniversary.

As for "The Professionals" and "Once upon a Time in the West," hello-o! Why has no one mentioned that the latter is a kind of sequel to or loose remake of the former, each based upon the *captivity narrative* of Claudia Cardinale, the creative genius behind both?

"Once upon a Time in the West" also benefits from that wonderful music with those same 3 themes (by Morricone?) played over and over again in different combinations. I don't know what they're called, but I always think of them as, "Claudia—Unhappy," "Claudia—Hope of Freedom," and "Claudia—Resolute" and I'm sure others do too. Finally, must acknowledge the ingenious back-story plot of "Once upon a Time in the West" written by Dario Argento and Bernardo Bertolucci, tho' the flashback lynching sequence late in the film, which explains

all the actions of the little boy who improbably grows up to be Charles Bronson, must have been invented by Argento alone. Thanks!

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Food for Life

09 Dec 1996

A benefit cookbook for AIDS meal programs had put Kevin and his white cat on page 140; he wanted the list to buy it, for the cause and for the photograph both.

This is Kevin Killian. I hope all of you can go to your bookstore and buy a copy of "Food for Life" ed. Lawrence Schimel (Cleis Press). This is a book of recipes by dozens of gay and lesbian etc., writers, poets, artists, athletes, film stars etc, all with cute pictures of the contributors making the recipes, and all of the profits go to various AIDS charities—the food service groups in many cities that go around and deliver meals to those too ill or weak from AIDS or other catastrophic illness to go out and get it themselves. (Alternately, you could just give the money directly to these groups, which are listed in an appendix to this book.) They are providing a great service, and this book is really cute. Me and my white cat Blanche appear on page 140 for all of you Poetics List people who have always wondered, what does Kevin Killian actually look like and what kind of thing does he eat? I never thought I'd appear in the same book as Martina or Ru-Paul. This has got to be seen to be believed! Thanks.

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Oppen lecture, December 5

09 Dec 1996

Peter Quartermain's annual Oppen lecture at the Poetry Center; Kevin came away turning over the question the talk had left him — Oppen and the women poets who followed him.

This is Kevin Killian. I missed the very first sentence of the 11th Oppen lecture at the Poetry Center of San Francisco State, so I missed Peter Quartermain's announcement of his methodology.... Afterwards I ran around asking people what he had said. Apparently he had written to quite a number of women writers asking them a) if they had ever known Oppen and b) what they made of his work. A large number replied and he was able, quite skillfully, to weave their responses into his talk, which seemed centered on a few closely related themes. What were Oppen's own thoughts about the position of women in the socialist revolution? What did he make of the new (1960s/1970s) wave of female poets who followed some of his trails, and why did he seek so many of them out? What "news" had they for him, and vice versa? A large crowd of interested people listened intently as PQ captured some of Oppen's ambivalence and contradictory thought on these questions. Oppen, he told us, advised Denise Levertov to go lightly on writing on

political and social issues, while out of the other side of the mouth he berated Kathleen Fraser for not delving into them deeply enough. PQ teased some sense out of this apparent paradox, but stopped short of actually coming out and saying Oppen was a misogynist, I wonder why? Perhaps this wasn't the time or place. After the lecture, PQ and Jewelle Gomez, the formidable director of the Poetry Center, fielded a number of spirited questions from the audience. I hope this talk is published in its entirety, somewhere, sometime soon because I think I have failed to give a sense of how interesting it was and how multi-dimensional. All week long in San Francisco we have been having a whole year's worth of poetry events so I guess I was wired! More later.... Sighted at this event was the novelist Dorothy Allison, who asked afterwards, "Who is that stunning woman with the copper colored hair over there? She is my dream girl," and it turned out to be Kathleen Fraser.

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Re: Oppen lecture, December 5

10 Dec 1996

A reader pressed him on whether he had really meant to call Oppen a misogynist; Kevin walked the charge back and forward at the same time.

At 2:26 PM 12/9/96, [REDACTED] wrote:

Kevin—I don't see why the "apparent paradox" you describe below wld make Oppen a "misogynist," i.e. "one who hates women." Steve

Dear Steve, I must have been overstating (and skipping). Of course, as I said, Quartermain himself never made any such generalization (in his lecture at the Poetry Center). Wait till you see his paper for yourself; in cold print the effect may be very different. In situ, the total effect of the testimony of so many different women writers (and of such different kinds), responding to Oppen, was very forcible, shock wave making. PQ did in fact say that Oppen, born in 1909, could not be judged by the standards of today, or even of the period in question. I couldn't recall many exact quotes from Oppen, but I do recall one passage in which he chides Fraser for dwelling on "feminine" subjects, commanding her to bring her writing "up into the world," — such an odd turn of phrase, redolent of the stock criticism of women's writing—in which what men write about is universal, and what women write about is fluff. In this trope ("up into the world"), sub-terranean fluff like the Orcs. —Kevin Killian.

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Re: patr-iarchy/onization

14 Dec 1996

Jay Schwartz reported Cid Corman slighting women poets at Naropa; Kevin, who had once interviewed Corman about Spicer, offered a more generous instance to set against it.

At 6:38 PM +0000 12/14/96, Jay Schwartz wrote:

I was at the Naropa Institute for "Cid Corman" week in '95, and Corman made many, many comments regarding white male poets from the 40's to the present, yet had to be prodded to even mention women poets of any ethnicity. When he did, he only mentioned Levertov and Niedecker, and then with a degree of condescension and ghettoization.

This is Kevin Killian. I interviewed Corman several years back about his meetings with Jack Spicer, and I must say he went out of his way to talk about his (contemporaneous) encounters with the poets Joanne Kyger and Lenore Kandel. He was talking about 1960, fairly early date to begin an appreciation of these two (still terribly underrated) writers. But I agree with Judy, those comments on the "Granite Pail" book are true space oddities!! Thanks—KK.

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1997

Dick and Spicer

12 Jan 1997

A reader had surfaced an old fanzine rumor that Philip K. Dick once roomed with Duncan and Spicer at a Berkeley address; such questions found their way, inevitably, to the man who had spent years writing Spicer's life.

This is Kevin Killian, returning to list after long Christmas slumber.

David Zauhar wrote, "Yesterday I was talking to a friend who's a science fiction nut, and he asked me if I had ever heard of poets named Robert Duncan and John Spicer. I said, sure, only it's Jack Spicer, why? and he said that he recently read in an old PKD fanzine that Dick once shared an apartment with two poets named Duncan and Spicer . . . Is this true? Is this common knowledge? This is interesting to me because Spicer and Dick have both asserted a notion of writing as something dictated from the outside: Spicer's poet-as-radio is analogous to Dick's idea of getting his words from outer space."

Dear David, as Maria Damon has told you, this is basically a true tale. Your friend of speaking of the rooming house at 2018 McKinley at Berkeley where Philip K. Dick lived right after graduating from high school. This was in the autumn of 1947. You can find most of the details in various biographies of Dick. Spicer,

Duncan, and Dick all lived there at the same time, though in different apartments. For some reason there is no plaque on the building.

I've been writing the life of Jack Spicer for many years & the mystery continues, exactly the mystery to which you allude, how is it that Spicer and Dick in later life came to such similar conclusions about the source of writing! Apparently, when asked to verify that he had known Philip Dick, Robert Duncan denied ever knowing him to Dick biographers. After he was "famous," in the early 60s, Dick wrote a kind of cute letter to Duncan asking if he remembered him, and Duncan wrote back and said, No, which hurt Dick's feelings. Privately, however, Duncan told several people he knew Dick extremely well. So that's another mystery.

Dick was the high school pal of Jerry Ackerman, who became Duncan's boyfriend and was the inspiration for RD's "Venice Poem." At the time of his death, PKD was starting work on a new novel, "The Owl at Midnight," which was to be an semi-autobiographical account of his time at 2018 McKinley and his encounters with Duncan and Spicer and the other roomers at the place. Philip Lamantia lived there too, as did George Haimsohn—who later achieved a fame of his own on Broadway no less, as the author of the camp parody "Dames at Sea." Haimsohn wrote, under a pseudonym, his own account of the period, "The Battle between the Poets and the Painters," which was published in a notorious gay pulp porn paperback called "Carnal Matters." (Robert Bertholf has acquired a copy of this volume, which is interleaved with photos of young naked boys having sex with each other, for the Duncan archive at the Poetry/Rare Books Collection at U C Buffalo.)

Jack Spicer, who read avidly in science fiction, was familiar with Dick's subsequent work. One of Dick's novels in particular is actually quite startling to those who know Spicer's writing, for it begins at the hot dog stand at San Francisco's Aquatic Park, as do "After Lorca," "Admonitions," and "Lament for the Makers" (all books by Spicer). The name of Dick's book is escaping me now.... is it something like "Counter Clockwise World?" Please, Dick aficionados, help me out here.

I've gone on long enough but you get the general idea.

—Kevin Killian

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"Little Men"

25 Jan 1997

A new collection of stories was out from Hard Press, and here Kevin takes one of his periodic turns as his own best publicist — a role he plays with more relish than shame.

Hi everyone, it's Kevin Killian. I hope you'll all buy a copy of my new book, "Little Men" (Hard Press). It's terrific. It costs \$12.95 (US).

Carla Harryman wrote, "Like cut diamonds reflecting back their own breaking points these tales speak the impossible as if the impossible itself could be bought and sold as jewelry. The palpability of Kevin Killian's storytelling is perfect even if, as we bask in the paradoxical charisma of it, the good guys have gone and stolen the jewelry for no reason...All this pleasure of affront may be due to Killian's finessing of middle brow culture unto one of those secret toxic dumps, leaving us with a brilliant and frightening phenomenology of what's left."

I find this comment very wise and true.

Here's another wise one, from Robert Gluck:

"Kevin Killian writes like a bent angel who wants to inflict pleasure and delectation. His confections dissolve into sensation on the tongue. Pleasure and safety are opposites, and these jumpy stories turn on the moment when our hero sees the broader perspective—of someone who wants to damage him. Like Nabokov, Killian 'does' our culture in great writing, with delicious style, generous and wicked. His sheer conversance with all departments of our civilization, and with the shapes a sentence and a story can take, amount to a kind of performance art of its own."

Well, what do you know! Anyhow as you have guessed, "Little Men" is a book of stories. Here's what they're about:

Kevin Killian, the author of "Shy" and "Bedrooms Have Windows," is injected with sodium pentathol and forced to reveal his most intimate secrets to a skeptical audience. In Los Angeles, the ghost of Natalie Wood appears to a dying fan. An Irish transvestite hires a bellhop for a marriage of convenience. In San Francisco a drunken father (Kevin Killian) takes his Gen X son (Josh Cherin) to the premiere of "Jurassic Park." On Long Island a group of Franciscan brothers stage a beauty contest for incoming freshmen—the judgment of Paris. In Steinbeck country an autograph dealer forges mementos of Audrey Hepburn while seducing a muscle-bound ex-con in orange undershorts. On Halloween the boys from Hitchcock's "Rope" throw their own party in the haunted house of Usher. To steal the love of his sister's scientist husband, a San Francisco weakling turns to steroids. In 60's Manchester, David Smith falls under the spell of a strange married couple, who read him Sade, and make him murder the one boy who really loves him . . .

I have more to say about this too, but let's wait til after you've read the book. Thanks everyone!

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Re: Collapse

01 Feb 1997

George Bowering had praised the new Vancouver journal Collapse, a handsome thing devoted that season to Blaser and Kiyooka; Kevin knew its contents well enough to add a correction of his own.

It's Kevin Killian. I second the recommendation by George Bowering is "Collapse 2, The Verbal and the Visual." It's really fine from cover to cover. Besides the features on Blaser and Kiyooka, there's a long article on Emily Carr (a transcript of a round table discussion by many eminent Carr scholars); as well as an interesting never before printed manifesto by Robert Smithson.

However I should point out one error . . . in the section about Blaser I am given the credit for bringing the Helen Adam collages from Buffalo to Vancouver in 1995. This credit belongs to the poet Kristin Prevallet. I'm sorry, Kristin! This seems to be happening to you all the time! This wasn't my fault either! (The coffee table book "Women of the Beat Generation" by Brenda Knight has a lengthy account of Helen Adam almost entirely lifted from Prevallet's pioneering research into Adam's life and work, yet signed by Knight.) More on this later. In the meantime, order "Collapse."

I dont know whether anyone here has mentioned a terrific new mag called _Collapse_. Calling it a magazine isnt doing it justice. It is more than that. The second issue, called "The Verbal and the Visual", has several works on Robin Blaser, including articles by Charles Watts and Charles Bernstein. It also includes a CD with the voices of Blaser and Roy Kiyooks.

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Re: Click Rose by Dominique Fourcade

01 Feb 1997

Forrest Gander had arrived breathless about Dominique Fourcade's Click-Rose in Keith Waldrop's translation; Kevin met the enthusiasm and carried it somewhere Gander had not gone.

At 8:02 PM -0500 2/1/97, Forrest Gander wrote:

Whoa! what galloping screeching halting turn-on-a-dime and kiss my ass stanzas make up Dominique Fourcade's Click-Rose, new from Sun & Moon, rendered to us American English readers through the hypersensitive alembic of Keith Waldrop's ear. It's a clinodromic booklength sequence. His rose a sthenic, moving target of surprises in syntax diction tone and pulse. Hilarious. And lovely in its inclusiveness of friends, art, history, books, what a rich broth!

Fourcade's fans will also want to read "Compact pour Claude," his lengthy catalogue essay printed at the end of "Laque sur Polaroid," the collection of Claude Royet-Journoud's painted-over photographs (Michel Chandleigne, 1996). The photographs themselves are quite startling, anatomical close-ups of a vagina in the Hustler style. L'Etat vs. Larry Flynt. I was so impressed by "Laque sur Polaroid" that I wrote to Paris and offered Royet-Journoud the use of my own genitals for a sequel. He demurred. Pourquoi pas?

Kevin Killian <http://www.multicom.org/gerbil/kkill.htm>

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RLIN search

04 Feb 1997

Deep in tracking where Spicer's manuscripts had scattered, he turned to the list as a reference desk, a cataloguer's code in hand.

Can anyone help me? I have this print out from RLIN that tells me where all the Spicer manuscripts are lodged throughout the country in what different university libraries, etc.... however, they use a code I find hard to crack. Can someone tell me what and where "RRAL" ("Resources for Research in American Culture") is?

Thanks---

Kevin Killian

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"Arctic Summer"

07 Feb 1997

His first novel in years took its name from the book E. M. Forster began and abandoned; another self-heralding notice, which he could no more resist sending than a title he liked.

It's Kevin Killian. I would like to announce the publication of my new book, "Arctic Summer" and urge all of you to look for it in your bookstores, to get it from the publisher, or to get it from SPD. It is my first novel in 7 years and took me 10 years to write. Maybe some of you will like it, it's set in the poetry scene of the 50s, starts out in New York and winds up at Black Mountain College in North Carolina. Some of you will know that "Arctic Summer" was the name of the novel E M Forster began, then abandoned, about this time.

Masquerade Books 801 Second Avenue New York, NY 10017

Thanks also to all of you who have told me that you have ordered my book "Little Men" from Hard Press. I don't think I've had an original title in many years, and my next book will be "Reading Race."

[↑ Contents](#)**Re: Repugnant selves**

23 Feb 1997

For weeks the list had been reckoning with the anti-Semitism in Spicer's and Dorn's work, and here Maria Damon puts the question straight to the man writing Spicer's life. He does not merely answer it — he had a confession of his own, of the kind he could never quite keep to himself.

At 12:50 PM -0600 2/23/97, Maria Damon wrote:

I'd love to hear from Kevin (or anyone else, for that matter), what the function of anti-Semitism is in Spicer's work/psyche. Ron Silliman head totally fogged in a bad cold i think the function of spicer's antisemitism is 1) part oif a general east-coast phobia (part of what he complained of abt nyc wa the "jewfaced children") 2)a sense that judaism was homophobic (cf the story of lot in sodom), and that jews had a more public claim to oppression than gay people, which he resented.

It's Kevin Killian here. Maria, you have hit the nail on the head as far I know; I'd like to add a couple of other points too . . . 3)a pathological rebellion against various strains of Spicer's family myth; the hideous things Spicer wrote came directly after the death of his father 4) a psycho-dynamic between JS and Robert Duncan, in which Duncan was the "good" man and Spicer was cast as the wild fauve; and in general a poetic climate in which savage, problematized irony was valued, the thicker the better

I guess I should share my dilemma with you all, what would you have done? (I've been writing, with Lew Ellingham, a biography of Jack Spicer for many years, and some of you know this story already.) A few years ago I was lucky enough to get to examine the papers, which are in private hands, of the poet Stephen Jonas; and imagine my delight when I found among them an "unknown" poem by Spicer. Then imagine my anguish when I read it and saw it was by far the most anti-Semitic of all his writings. A lot of you on this list are scholars, what would you have done? I had actually the option, I suppose, of destroying this poem; for what good would it do to show it to the world? I felt like a character in a Henry James novel—no, in an Irving Wallace novel! I tabled a number of Spicer experts, one of whom advised me gravely to "get rid of it. Spicer's reputation is bad enough already. Besides, does 'the world' need yet another piece of anti-Semitic propaganda?"

What would you have done? I had the piece of paper right in my hand, and no one would ever have known.

Except I probably would have told someone, I just can't keep myself to myself.

Please give me your opinions on this. Thanks, Kevin K.

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Re: Repugnant selves

23 Feb 1997

Jerome Rothenberg wondered aloud what Ed Dorn had done to earn the list's contempt. Kevin, it turned out, carried a longer grievance than most.

At 11:24 AM -0800 2/23/97, Jerry Rothenberg wrote:

Nor would it surprise me if some of the dumping on Dorn in particular had some subtext — of other resentments — that isn't being stated. What did the man possibly say that puts him in a league (the way some of the correspondence sounds) with Pound's anti-semitism or fascism? What if anything?

Dear Jerry, and others, whatever, it's Kevin Killian here, and I have tried to stay out of the Dorn debate as long as possible, but I just can't keep myself to myself. A few years ago I wrote a letter to the editors of the Buffalo magazine "Apex of the M," prompted by an issue of the magazine which contextualized Dorn as a great human being and poet and thinker. My letter was pretty mean I suppose; the editors decided not to publish it because, they said, they don't publish "letters to the editors." This was a policy decision on their part, okay. Kevin Magee and Myung Mi Kim then printed my "Open Letter" in their poetry newsletter, whereupon it became part of the public record. If you would like me to send you a copy just let me know. (If anyone on this list or elsewhere would like a copy, send me your address.) After you read it, Jerry, you will have in fact the answers to some of the questions you pose above. Love, Kevin

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Re: killian / pug selves

23 Feb 1997

Someone named Anselm had dared him to post his open letter to the whole list. Behind that letter stood Steve Abbott — the New Narrative poet whose literary executor Kevin was, and whom Dorn's magazine had mocked as he was dying.

Dear Anselm,

Hi! It's Kevin Killian. Yes, 1) was a form of preemptive self-criticism. I don't expect you to take me "seriously." I felt drawn in to the ongoing discussion about Ed Dorn based on personal feelings, not definitive ones. I wrote my "open letter" as a friend and the literary executor of the poet Steve Abbott, who died of AIDS a few years after being awarded the "AIDS Award for Poetic Idiocy," in the pages of Ed Dorn's magazine "Rolling Stock." I write on behalf of one on whom a beaker of poisoned blood was poured by the talented staff artists on "Rolling Stock," one who on his deathbed still strove to understand the motives behind this attack, one who tried to forgive, one who tried so hard to forgive it broke my heart. He is no longer alive, but I am, and why shouldn't I say exactly what I feel?

I decline your challenge to post my open letter on the poetics list. I have already offered to send it through the regular mail to anyone interested. However why should I waste the bandwidth of so many who have no interest in the subject? It's quite long and involved and also uses a lot of italics, Anselm.

It was published in a "fugitive" poetry publication, true, but don't hold that against it. (You might say "Rolling Stock" was a fugitive publication: that doesn't mean people don't read it, people don't take it to heart, and people don't cry after reading it.) What's "fugitive" and what's not? I forget what happens in the pages of the New York Times Book Review a minute after I read it, but I have not forgotten many of your poems, for example, years after I spotted them in various "fugitive" publications over the years.

Yours,

Kevin K.

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Political Animals

27 Feb 1997

A late bulletin about his March play, and a chance to salute Nick Robinson of the Bay Area Poets Theater — the man whose work first made Kevin want to write for the stage.

It's Kevin Killian. I know I have used this space already to announce my play on March 6 but I wanted to announce a late-breaking development. After many years away from the stage, Mr. Nick Robinson will be joining my cast of international stars, essaying the pivotal role of fallen Ubermensch Christopher Reeve. Nick Robinson was the man whose work with Poet's Theater here in the Bay Area first made me want to write for the stage. Now he returns in "Political Animals." I feel the puffed up pride of MGM's Louis B. Mayer when he told the world, in 1945, to promote "Adventure" (Victor Fleming), —

"Gable's Back—and Garson's Got Him!"

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Re: mimeo revolution

06 Mar 1997

The list had fallen to reminiscing about the mimeograph magazines of the sixties. Stephen Vincent reached for Open Space, and Kevin, who knew its production history cold, took the handoff.

At 12:20 AM -0500 3/6/97, Stephen Vincent wrote:

Open Space edited by Harold Dull - San Francisco, early sixties. (tres rare, brilliant - Spicer, Kyger etc etc) primarily - as I recall - publically given away free atop a table in the basement of City Lights

"Open Space" was actually edited by the poet Stan Persky, under Spicer's direction. Tho' it looked like a mimeo magazine it was actually offset. "Open Space" was planned to run for one year, from Jan-Dec 1964, with an issue appearing every month; in the event 15 issues appeared, extra issues to celebrate Valentines Day, Baseball Season, and one extremely limited issue, #9, was printed to thwart collectors who might sell a complete run to universities, libraries, etc.

Spicer's earlier magazine "J" was indeed a mimeo magazine. "J" appeared for five issues during the second half of 1959. Jack Spicer and Fran Herndon solicited the writing and art work for "J," and the artists who contributed (Herndon herself, Jess Collins, Russell FitzGerald) drew their pictures directly onto the stencil. Jess' comic strip panels, so intricate, so flowing in line, and so funny, were executed without a single false line. How did they do it? How did they do these things without a backspace key?

Wonderingly,

Kevin Killian

Wonderingly,

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Astrology poetics/Spicer's "Language"

19 Mar 1997

Someone named Ira was collecting poems about astrology. Kevin, ever the Spicer man, brought one from the opposite camp — and, as host at Small Press Traffic, slipped in a small errand while he had the floor.

Dear Ira, it's Kevin Killian. Here's a piece by Jack Spicer which is an *anti-astrology* poem, I hope this counts in your survey.

³If you don't believe in a god, don't quote him,²

Valéry once said when he was about ready to give
up poetry. The purposefull suspension of dis-
belief has about the chance of a snowball in hell.

Lamias maybe, or succubi but they are about as real in
California as night-crawlers

Gods or stars or totems are not game-animals.

Snark-hunting

is not like discussing baseball.

Against wisdom as such. Such

Tired wisdoms as the game-hunters develop

Shooting Zeus, Alpha Centauri, wolf with the same toy gun.

It is deadly hard to worship god, star, and totem. Deadly

easy

To use them like worn-out condoms spattered by your own
gleeful, crass, and unworshipping

Wisdom

The Duncan-Spicer crowd was way influenced by astrology—in this poem Spicer is attacking Robert Duncan, George Stanley and Harold Dull for their repetitive use of astrology in their then (1964) current projects . . . aligning himself with Charles Olson who in his 50s essay "Against Wisdom as Such" had warned American readers about San Francisco writing as a school of mages "ominous as Ojai."

This poem is from Spicer's "Love Poems" in his book "Language."

Now I get to repeat my *songspiel.* A marvelous benefactor has given Small Press Traffic a number of copies of the first edition of Spicer's "Language" allowing us to sell them to benefit the organization. They are in mint condition and you have never seen anything as beautiful as this book, more often now seen in rare book catalogues looking tattered, dirty, and gray and still costing a bomb. She (anonymous benefactor) wants us to make sure they get into what she calls "the right hands" (those of artists and poets) so, a couple months ago, Dodie Bellamy announced this offer through the poetics list to *quelle* response. There are however still a few copies left, so, if anyone is interested, back channel me or Dodie at [REDACTED] for more information. And now back to regularly scheduled programming.

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Re: catching up on S.F. readings

03 Apr 1997

Steve Carll had posted the month's crowded Bay Area reading calendar; Kevin, constitutionally unable to leave a list unfinished, added the dates Carll had missed.

At 10:55 PM -0800 4/1/97, Steve Carll wrote:

April's gonna be a busy month for poetry here, with readings coming up by Darin DeStefano, Elizabeth Robinson, and Chris Daniels on the 5th, Deena Metzger on the 9th, Rob Hale, Doug Powell and George Albon on the 12th, John High on the 13th, Avery Burns and Ron Silliman on the 14th, Eileen Myles on the 15th, Steve McCaffery and Liz Willis on the 19th, Bob Grenier and Fanny Howe on the 20th, Kristin Prevallet on the 25th (talk on Helen Adams) and 27th (poetry reading), Barrett Watten on the 26th, Michael Boughn and Brian Lucas on the 27th, and then Ron Johnson on May Day. And that's not counting Kevin Killian's play "The Schwimmer Effect" on April 4th. Whew!

Good work, Steve, summarizing all these dates. May I, Kevin Killian, add a few more events happening this week in Bay Area? Tonight, April 3, Harry Mathews

at the Alliance Francaise; Monday, Jeanette Winterson at Diesel; Tuesday, David Sedaris at Rizzoli and I believe it's April 10th, Robin Blaser will be stealing in and out of UC Santa Cruz.

Looked at this way it does sound kind of tiring.

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Re: denver conference etc...

09 Apr 1997

A conference in Denver had reached him secondhand; the report gave him less to say about the conference than about its reporters' shared allergy to the shift key.

| joe et. al.--

Dear Chris Alexander and Joe Amato, hi, it's Kevin Killian. Between the two of you, I now have a feel for what happened at this "Denver Conference."

I have to ask, also, did you two fellows reach a consensus with each other about not using capitalization? Or is this a total, adjunct *coincidence*?

just kidding, kevin k.

By the way, is Lisel Mueller on this list? How about that Lisel walking away with the Pulitzer Prize for poetry! Congratulations, Lisel, and please send your autograph. not kidding, kevin k.

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Re: LAURA NYRO (one child born to carry on, etc....)

10 Apr 1997

Laura Nyro had just died. Kevin loved her the way he loved most things — early, wholly, and with a story attached.

| According to Toronto's Globe and Mail, Nyro died on Tuesday at her home in

It's Kevin Killian. I adored Laura Nyro. I remember my father coming to me, a broken man, knocking on the door of my room, and saying, "Kevin, we know you have a right to listen to whatever music you want, and you're 13 now, but your mother and I have agreed to buy you a car if you promise a) to get out of the house more and b) to surrender those Laura Nyro albums."

One of her records (or maybe it was the sleeve) was impressed with a strange haunting perfume. That scent put a spell on me.

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Re: Joe Dunn

18 Apr 1997

Joe Dunn belonged to the Spicer circle — the printer of White Rabbit Press in its first years. Michael Franco brought word of his death, and Kevin, plainly, marks it.

At 11:46 AM -0400 4/17/97, Michael Franco wrote:

| *Sad news in this morning that Joe Dunn passed away this week-*

Dear Michael, it's Kevin Killian, thanks for letting us know about Joe Dunn's death. He was, I think, a wonderful writer, and one of the nicest people I've ever met. His friends and admirers were all, I suppose, waiting for the other shoe to fall, but this is still awfully sad. I hope more of his work sees its way into print.

"The third word is 'eros' Who will cling to you every birthright Bringing your heart substance. Whomever you touch will love you, Will feel the cling of His touch upon you Like sunlight scattered over an ancient mirror." —Jack Spicer, "Five Words for Joe Dunn on his Twenty-Second Birthday"

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Re: lodging for Poetry and the Public Sphere

21 Apr 1997

Charles Bernstein had meant to write one person about a hotel room and wrote the entire list by mistake. Kevin treated the accident as the gift it plainly was.

Dear Charles, I hope you find somewhere to stay at the Rutgers conference, but your message posted publicly in error failed to say anything mean about either Bob Perelman or Alan Golding! You owe all of us on the Poetics List a second apology for failing to provide us with the ultimate *frisson de la net.*

| *Dear Kathy: At the last minute here my lodging plans seem to be collapsing. I was going to stay with friends in Philadelphia & commute by train. But now (I won't go into all the reasons) that seems to be impossible. Bob Perelman has offered me space in his hotel room*

HERE WAS YOUR CHANCE TO SAY—"I would rather eat carpet tacks than share a hotel room with Bob Perelman."

with Alan Golding,

| *pending Alan's assent. I'm willing to take a pallet on a floor, or even just a floor if it comes to that. And of course I will contribute my share. I have emailed Alan asking him*

HERE WAS YOUR CHANCE TO SAY, —"But Alan is so cheap he begrudges even the price of an e-mail, and his prostate has become so enlarged I fear he will step on me during one of his fifty trips to the bathroom during each long New Jersey night."

Oops, I had better stop now, I'm getting into this too much, and speak as a fond admirer of Alan, Bob and Charles,

Good luck everyone, XXX Kevin Killian

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No prizes

14 May 1997

One of his periodic appeals to the list as a collective reference desk — dates, addresses, and, as promised, no prizes.

Hello everyone, it's Kevin Killian. Can any of you brains out there back channel me with answers to 3 questions?

1. What was the date of the conviction of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg? Were there 2 separate trials or just one? And also, the date of the execution(s)? Now that's cheerful, eh?

2. Does anyone know the address of the poet Mark Doty?

3. Or of the novelist Ishmael Reed?

No prizes, only thanks from a California air head . . .

Kevin K.

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Re: dirty postmodernism

19 May 1997

Kent Johnson had floated a theory of literary corruption involving Paul Hoover, Marvin Bell, and a coveted prize. Kevin declined the invitation to be scandalized — at length, and by way of the movie stars.

At 10:49 PM +0600 5/17/97, Mr. Kent Johnson wrote:

I heard from a friend that Paul Hoover's book (the editor of the humoungous (sp?) Norton Postmodern American Poetry), had been selected by none other than Marvin Bell, most recently author of the very depressing series "Poems of the Dead Man," and director, I think, of the Iowa Writer's Workshop, for the "coveted" National Poetry Series! I was wondering: Is this cause for rejoicing, embarrassment, second-thoughts, or factional reconciliation? Certainly, Mr. Hoover's authority as an arbiter of "Postmodernism" (insofar as he gladly accepts Mr. Bell's approval) might be called into question? I was, in part, wondering, because I heard from a third party that when Mr. Hoover was in Iowa City a couple months ago, he talked shit at the bar to Creative Writing students about my friend (and significantly greater poet than he) Forrest Gander, who was visiting poet at the time there. Is it possible, I wonder, that Mr. Hoover's little visit to Iowa City could have had something to do with his little prize?

Hi, this is Kevin Killian, in psychic bewilderment about what is going on in above item. Is Mr. Hoover to be reviled because he accepted some kind of prize from Mr. Marvin Bell? If so, what to be made of Mr. Gander, who accepted some kind of "visiting poet" post from Mr. Bell? I don't get it.

Sounds like all of us should stay out of bars, where students congregate, since students will report what we say to our enemies. Report or distort, since I, once a student myself, remember delighting myself in complete invention and once gave such a terrible account of the ancient Katherine Anne Porter that she died a few weeks later. I was also there during Robert Lowell's last poetry reading and yes, went to a bar with him afterwards, and then he got on that plane and, well, died while I was still lying about him! I felt no guilt about this and believe that few students would. If there are other students on this list perhaps you can confirm or deny my suspicions.

As for McVay's note that "Jorie Graham is well known for never accepting a gig unless there's something in it for hubby James Galvin too," it's true that Elizabeth Taylor killed her own career by making too many films with Richard Burton. But I keep thinking, God, can't Bruce Willis think of some way to help poor Demi Moore out of her precarious pitch on the lower slopes of hasbeenism?

I feel for these people. But now I am thinking that perhaps Johnson means only that Gander should have gotten the award, if he is the "significantly greater poet" than Hoover, while Hoover should have been content with the visiting poet position? I say, give it a rest, all will come right at the end. I'm sure none of these people are half as bad as Johnson has made them out to be. We're only here for a short while and we might as well try to hold out the olive branch and peace, love and understanding.

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"Horror Tape Script"

22 May 1997

Raymond Pettibon — the artist of Black Flag's flyers and, by then, the Whitney's walls — had written a play and cast Kevin in it. This is the pitch.

Hello everyone, it's Kevin Killian. I hope all of you in the San Francisco Bay Area this weekend, especially you visitors, come to see me in my greatest role in Raymond Pettibon's play "Horror Tape Script" which we are putting on at New Langton Arts on Friday and Sunday. That's at 1246 Folsom between 8th and 9th (San Francisco).

Those of you who have seen Pettibon's work, say at the Whitney Biennial, will be glad to know that besides having written the play, he has designed this production too. I am playing "Grif," the fullback for the John Dewey High School

Bobcats, and Wayne Smith and Edmund Berrigan are my team mates. We bring our cheerleader girl friends (Mark Ewert, Cliff Hengst and Karla Milosevich) to a deserted mountain lake in the woods and then the play turns into a kind of Friday the 13th/Berlin Alexanderplatz kind of festival of violence and sensation. Don't miss it if you possibly can, we've been rehearsing like crazy and it should be terrific. We're doing this play in support of the new exhibition at Langton by D-L Alvarez and Ruby Neri which opens tonight. On Saturday if you are still in town Carla Harryman and Lyn Hejinian will be reading, same space, same location, amid Pettibon's marvelous sets.

So, come on down. Thanks everyone. Hope to see you, I'll be there in my supporter and thigh pads, dress accordingly.

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Questions about who is where, etc. Thanks

03 Jun 1997

Another reference-desk appeal, with a bulletin folded in: the Spicer biography, years in the making, was at last coming due.

Hello everyone it's Kevin Killian, a day late and a dollar short. Thanks to all of you who helped me with my questions about Julius and Ethel Rosenberg. And for giving me all the different addresses for Mark Doty and Ishmael Reed.

I have some more stupid questions and am depending on my poetics pals again to pull my chestnuts out of the fire. Can anybody back channel me with the addresses of . . . Margaret Atwood? Galway Kinnell? William Wollman? Jeanette Winterson?

Also, I'd like to second Jay Schwartz' recommendation of the "Idiom" web site. I know there are many out there who think San Francisco writing scene is dead, but there are many young people here doing some fine work and making much commotion. Hooray for them! And now back to work for me on finishing the life of Jack Spicer which must be finished June 15th, wish me luck everyone. XXX, Kevin.

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Re: jwcurry, sondheim, kdawn,& Spicer

16 Jun 1997

Kim Dawn had been baiting Dodie in the shared inbox; Kevin sails past it to the news that mattered to him — after fifteen years, the Spicer biography was finished and gone to Wesleyan.

At 6:45 PM -0400 6/16/97, Kim Dawn wrote:

this isn't acker's world baby. tell her, em. please, hot stuff, put me upon the right boat. oh, boy do i need direction. oh boy, do i do i do i do i do i do i do i do i. i do. can't you see dodie? i was crying out for your help. please show me the way to proper bad girl prose. or, is it fact or is it fiction. there i go being stupid again. a stupid cunt. ALARM, THAT DAWN GIRL IS TRYING TO SHOCK US. I HEAR AN OBNOXIOUS YAWN FROM DODIE.

Hi everyone, it's Kevin Killian. Just wanted to let you all know, that yes, today I finally finished writing the biography of Jack Spicer and sent it off to the publisher (Wesleyan) before my deadline! Hooray! Lew Ellingham started this book in May 1982 and now it is done . . . I want to thank all of you on this list who have helped me over the years in all the different ways—

—And just being there to listen to me fret and worry about 1) was I putting too much in 2) leaving too much out 3) was I going to say the wrong thing 4) was I going to send it to the publishers, and then, some shocking fact would emerge that would throw all my conclusions out the window (tho' now I can't imagine what that might be, but something like, you know, Zukofsky wrote "After Lorca" as a prank.

You have all been angels. But Kim Dawn, what is going on? See what happens when my back is turned, people start using capital letters. Leave Dodie alone, I can hardly believe what I'm reading, and here I was actually thinking of making a visit to Canada.

Also, the editor at Wesleyan says that they are also going to print Peter Gizzi's edition of Spicer's lectures at the same time as the biography. So that's next spring.

Okay, more later, thank you—everybody for all your support.—XXX Kevin

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Re: tumblers

16 Jul 1997

Versace had just been shot in Miami, and Kevin was in one of his omnivorous moods, moving from the tabloids to the biographies with equal appetite.

Hi everyone, it's Kevin Killian. Still reeling from the assassination of Gianni Versace and now the newscasters are saying it might be Andrew Cunanan who killed him.

Anyway yesterday I was reading "USA Today" and saw the article about the UK poet Murray Lachlan Young with the "face of Daniel Day Lewis" and the "hair of Jim Morrison" and how his various poetic contracts amount to \$2,000,000.00 (translated to US money). Is anyone on the Poetics List familiar with this man's work? Please fill me in.

Also was drawn to USA Today's coverage of the new memoir by Erik Estrada, "My Road from Harlem to Hollywood." I guess in the book Erik Estrada is kind of tough on his former partner on "CHiPs," Larry Wilcox. "Asked about Erik Estrada's recollections of their 'CHiPs' days in "My Road from Harlem to Hollywood," former castmate Larry Wilcox, now head of a TV production company and a software company called MediaCore, replied via electronic mail. Here is an excerpt:

"To respond to Erik's perceptions would be a litany of material on philosophy and morals combined with what Jacques Derrida refers to as the malady of subjective perception." Only those perhaps who ever saw an episode of "CHiPs" will understand my shock, the way my eyes bugged out of my head while reading this. And it goes on and on.

I've been out of touch with the Poetics List lately and in an awful slump but did want to second Bennett Simpson's recommendation of Dennis Cooper's new novel "Guide" which I enjoyed no end. Actually Bennett Simpson feels less enthusiastic about this book than I do: "I started it this week and it's not inspiring, not titillating, obliquely critical, kinda nauseating and very far from my reality (does this make me a stump?). The dustjacket is calling him the new Genet. Well, huh. The characters are boring (but maybe not as much as they're supposed to be). I do like some of the stylistic tics however. Flatness going places." Some other books I have liked lately are biographies, Helen Sheehy's book on Eva Le Gallienne, Margot Peters' life of May Sarton, John Felstiner's "Paul Celan: Poet, Survivor, Jew," and Hertzfel Weinstat & Bert Wechsler's book "Dear Rogue," the life of the US baritone Lawrence Tibbett. (Although it has a dreadful opening line: "Most of us, when our course is run, deserve the anonymity of the grave. Not so Lawrence Tibbett . . .") Jackson Benson's life of Wallace Stegner is horrible. One other book I read at Naropa was Mary Butts' novel "Armed with Madness." This one I give 5 stars. I meant to post here my diary of what it was like to spend a week at Naropa but every sentence I wrote sounded just like Mary Butts. So there's influence for you! Or, maybe, the "malady of subjective perception."

Thanks, everyone.

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Re: Prizes

19 Jul 1997

Adrienne Rich had refused the National Medal of Arts in protest, and Joe Safdie was surprised the list had let it pass unremarked. Kevin fills in what she said.

At 2:44 PM -0700 7/18/97, Joe Safdie wrote:

Wasn't anyone going to remark on what I thought was the truly exemplary behavior of Adrienne Rich last week in refusing whatever poetry prize it was she was awarded? I only saw a brief newspaper column about it, but she made some highly critical remarks about Clinton's policies and said she couldn't accept such an award given that context.

Hi, it's Kevin Killian. In an interview here in San Francisco, Adrienne Rich spoke more fully and linked her decision to decline this award (the National Medal for the Arts, not specifically for poetry) to a number of previous examples. Leonard Bernstein declined the award, refusing to go to the White House while nothing was being done about AIDS. Stephen Sondheim ditto, while Wallace Stegner declined to protest "political censorship." Rich is an extraordinary woman with an extraordinary career, tho Dodie (Bellamy) tells me that Gigi Bradford and Donald Hall, both of whom apparently lobbied for years and years to get this recognition for Rich, are both a bit hurt about her decision. Must have been some wires crossed somewhere, for Rich said in the interview that she was surprised by her selection. ``Given the kind of work I do, the kind of poetry I write, it never seemed a likelihood that I would be proposed for it."

``I have a strong belief in the inseparability of art from society as a whole," Rich said July 10th. ``Where growing numbers of people are being marginalized, impoverished, scapegoated and beleaguered, I don't feel I can accept an award from the government that is pursuing these policies." She wrote to Clinton, ``The radical disparities of wealth and power in America are widening at a devastating rate. A president cannot meaningfully honor certain token artists while the people at large are so dishonored."

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Re: Words which make People Garbage.

20 Jul 1997

Mark Weiss had written the list something raw about sex work, love, and shame. The reply, from the shared account and signed with a persona, refuses the self-pity on the poster's behalf.

On Sat, 19 Jul 1997, Mark Weiss wrote: The bottom line is I AM a whore and I AM in live with a Faggot and I AM, for obvious reasons, deeply concerned with the mechanisms in place to make me feel like shit about both of those things. I thought that the people on this list would be responsive or interested in the way language operates as such a mechanism. So whatever, buddy. You made me feel really shitty so I feel like saying fuck you. But I won't.

You're the one who's using the shitty language, feeling shitty. The sex worker artists I know here in San Francisco, and there are many of them, it's a cool thing to be, have much higher self images than you exhibit. Why don't you try consciousness-raising rather than flinging your shit on a bunch of strangers.

Ms. Rhetorical Violence

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Re: Quantity & Quality

31 Jul 1997

The list was worrying the old charge that some poets simply write too much. Kevin, who would one day review by the thousand, had feelings about quantity.

Hugh Steinberg wrote:

John Kinsella writes: Interested in hearing what people have to say about "quality and quantity". That familiar "s/he's too prolific" can be pretty irksome for poets at times. It is most frequently levelled at those poets who are "experimenting" with language - one digression per financial year being more than enough... Fiction writers tend not to get it as much, and for "genre" writers it's usually seen as a plus! Actually, I've heard mention of the "Joyce Carol Oates" effect, where the prolificacy of the writer overwhelms the reader, leading to a sort of ho-hum response irregardless of the quality of the book at hand.

This is Kevin Killian and this is so true!

I was reading this book "Robert Penn Warren" by Joseph Blotner and thinking, if Robert Penn Warren writes one more book of poetry and wins one more Pulitzer Prize I'm going to break down in tears! Finally, he dies (oops, should have used some spoiler space). Anyway I knew very little about Robert Penn Warren before reading this book and now I feel I know too much.

How about the Janet Dailey scandal? (She is the US romance writer who, confronted with charges that she plagiarized a few of her books from the work of Nora Roberts, confessed to her fans that in 1990 and 1991 she was suffering from a psychological disturbance she did not, until now, even know she had!) I say, if one could write 200 books oneself, why steal 1 or 2 from one's rival . . . the Eve Harrington to one's own Margo Channing.

I don't think quantity vs. quality is a particularly useful way of looking at writing or writers.

I do. Maybe not at writing but at writers. There's a psychological disturbance in writing in any case. "Are George Oppen or Elizabeth Bishop good or bad poets because they didn't write that many poems?" In Oppen's case the poems he wrote in later life suggest to me a desperation about catching up after 25 years of silence, guilt about Stalinism, guilt about bowing to whoever or whatever it was told him to stop writing, etc. In Bishop's case there was the alcoholism and the tension about keeping her sexual life a secret. Yet these two actually managed to write quite a bit. I'm sure both of them had days when they sat there trying to remember in which book did I have the image of the fish, etc.

We all know writers who have written way too much, though we do not speak their names, perhaps due to an obscure reaction to our own feeling of living in a glass house! In the Penn Warren book he is often quoted as complaining that X or Y have "written themselves out," a kind of self-erasure like a Max Fleischer cartoon of the eraser working its way backwards around the outlined figure.

In San Francisco I go to a lot of poetry readings and am constantly trying to maintain my composure when someone gets up to the stage and says, this poem is in fifty numbered sections each with seven parts and an epigraph from Levinas and I wrote it in response to, then they look out at the audience and sigh, oh, I should just read the poem. And I'm there mumbling, no, what you should do is read for about eleven minutes and use the rest of the time to go home and do the laundry.

PS, John Kinsella, have these charges (or "writing too much") been levelled at you?

Thanks.

—A querulous San Francisco crank.

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Re: hypothesis and repeatability

03 Aug 1997

Lawrence Upton had asked, mid-thread, whether Americans still said airhead. Kevin took the bait, by way of Naomi Campbell and a novel almost no one had read.

On Sat, 2 Aug 1997 06:00:14 -0400 Lawrence Upton said:

and while you're doing that, just off at a tangent, do you guys use the word _airhead_ at all?

Keith Tuma says that the use of "airhead" is fading but I found it bubbling into my consciousness over and over again watching Naomi Campbell parade up and down the aisle of the church during the Versace funeral. But my reaction is probably influenced by a) being the only member of the poetics list to have read Naomi Campbell's novel, "Swan," and then b) seeing her interviewed by Larry King in which she admitted that she had never read "Swan," but on the other hand someone had told her the plot and it all sounded marvelous.

Kevin Killian

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Assistance requested

11 Aug 1997

The biography finished, the permissions began — the unglamorous afterlife of a book, here outsourced to the list.

Hello everyone on Poetics List, this is Kevin Killian. Please help me if you can! In connection with my upcoming biography of Jack Spicer, I have to secure permission to reprint unpublished material by the following writers:

Alfred Bester, e.e. cummings, Denise Levertov, Dorothy Livesay, Robert Lowell, Marianne Moore, Frank O'Hara.

Can anyone clue me in about, what are the names and addresses of the literary executors of these estates?

Some of you must have had similar problems, how did you handle them? Please back channel me, I don't know who else to turn to, had no idea modernism was so difficult! Thanks---

Kevin K.

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Re: The Name & the Paradox of its Contents

26 Sep 1997

The list had spent weeks on Dale Smith's Mike and Dale's Younger Poets and the politics of who gets published — a quarrel about editing, gender, and the phrase political correctness. Kevin came out of a long silence to take it point by point, agreeing with no one entirely.

Hi everyone it's Kevin Killian. My goodness, I don't think I've posted on this list in about a million years. Nevertheless this interesting thread brought me out of a drug induced stupor.

I have a different perspective than the other posts I've seen, including Dodie's. First of all, Dale Smith's work both as poet and editor is (tho' I haven't seen the new issue of "Mike and Dale's Younger Poets") usually first-rate and always provocative. There's no getting around that despite his method. Secondly, it's great to see a magazine with a strong editorial policy, so many magazines come out, you read them or look at them, zzzzzzz However Dale once you expound an editorial philosophy that flies in the face of the orthodoxy of political correctness, you must expect or perhaps enjoy the ensuing controversy. Didn't the same thing happen to the editors of "Apex of the M"?

Third, the thing I don't understand is, (I mean, the thing I don't empathize with, is) that an editor always publishes things he or she LIKES, what's the deal with that? I don't buy into that, but then I'm here in California and have the flat affectless I am a camera George Kuchar type of mind-set. Anyone who's read any of

the issues of "Mirage #4/Period[ical]" will know what I mean, that it's not about "fashion" in the way Dale says but it's about what drifts in front of our bleary screen; it's more of a diary I suppose, a document of my life and Dodie's and what happens from week to week in our (cultural) lives . . . I think most magazines actually operate that way however editors are always claiming, I don't know to what degree truly, that this is actually work they "like." Many poets send out their work all the time and it crosses the viewfinder of editor X or Y's rifle and bang. And most of these poets (the ones who send out their work all the time) are indeed, say, 90 per cent of them, men. Any editor will agree with that I think.

Fourthly, I don't believe that all these editors, etc., are constantly pursuing Hoa Nguyen for her work solely because she is a "woman of color". If her work wasn't very, very fine she would not be in the demand you describe. Of course it's an interesting question. Most sensible people occasionally wonder about the value of their own work so I don't blame Hoa for her doubts.

Fifthly, re: the preponderance of "straight white males" among the contributors of the new issue of "Mike and Dale's Younger Poets" . . . I don't know if they are all white or not but they certainly are not uniformly "straight" . . . Check it out, I did.

Sixthly I respect Dale's actually tireless commitment to the older poets he admires (Clark, Dorn, Kyger, Whalen, etc.), a beautiful thing to see; likewise his attempts, no matter how tortuous, to find a link between their writing and history with those of the younger poets, his peers.

Seventh, I disagree, as will many others on the list, with the idea that Gertrude Stein's poetics were deplorable or stemmed from "self narcissism." "Condoned" is too strong a word to use in this context.

Well, there I've gone on and on about this, but forgive me, all, the issues tempted me into speaking out a bit. I just thought of a few anecdotes to finish with, and one is, what is the name of that magazine that used to come to my door every month or so, edited by that man (Ellis?) who moved to Jerusalem or somewhere? I'll forget my own name next, but the magazine featured one or two poets in every issue, and after a while you just couldn't help noticing that every one of them was a man. This went on and on for years. I'd rip open the envelope and pull out the thing, and yes, there were another couple of men blathering about this that and the other . . . It became amusing in this awful way.

Someone help me out here with the name of the magazine, I'm sure many of you were in it.

The other one I remember was "Hole," this one issue came and sure enough, there was one woman in it, and she (Karen McCormack?) was only in it because the compositors had butchered her poem enough in a previous issue so that the

editors had to print it again in this one. I'm sure Louis Cabri took a lot of heat for that on both counts.

God bless you all for your work. XXX Kevin (Killian)

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Stepping into Steve Carll's shoes

28 Sep 1997

Steve Carll had been the list's tireless correspondent from the reading series until he unsubscribed; Kevin volunteers to fill the vacancy, and files a dispatch in his own unmistakable hand.

Went to a reading the other night and I saw Steve Carll there. I asked him, why no more reports on Poetics List. (for you who are new to Poetics List I should explain that SF poet Steve Carll used to come on here all the time and give reports on every reading he had been to, and that means plenty!) He shrugged and said he unsubscribed. I said I would try to fill in for him. First Leslie Scalapino read. (I can't remember all the different lines Steve used to quote from, so I will try to describe the story lines instead.) She read six poems from a sequence called "New Time" which I had not heard, then launched into the beginning of something she is calling a detective novel. Its title is "Orchid Jetsam." The two main characters, Grace Abe and Andrew Chen, work in the San Francisco Police Department and are investigating a strange murder case. Abe is additionally burdened (or enhanced) by the fact she is being possessed by the spirit of a Marine slain in the Gulf War Desert Storm who enters her body at inopportune times during the investigation. I asked Scalapino if she was riffing off the "X Files" because it certainly had that spooky the truth is out there kind of feeling about it. She said no, in fact she had never seen the "X Files" and you know something, I believed her! Anyway as usual a reading filled with great theatrical powers of "explaining" those long involved sentences and fragments of sentences, explaining them by keeping them balanced like the balls of the juggler, up in the air till she wants them to come down in the right or skewed places, through the voice and a subtle movement of the fingers of her left hand.

Then Edwin Torres came on. It was an interesting gamble to see if these two poets would work together successfully and one that seemed to invigorate them both. Torres used a boombox to play background chants and orchestral thumps and thwacks while reciting poetry and sounds over the recorded sounds. Many young people in the audience responded favorably to this combination, one woman told me that this was the best reading she had ever heard in her life. The words came often from Torres new book "SandHommeNomadNo" and a forthcoming CD "Holy Kid" (Kill Rock Stars label). Torres who had never read before in San Francisco seemed pleased and abashed by his reception. We will be

sorry to see him go back to New York, but around here, nobody stays for very long, they are all dust in the wind. You think you will have stability in your life, but you don't. It's a fact of life in San Francisco that all must deal with sooner or later. The poetry reflects this. Torres was always doing all this formalistic stuff—breaking words down into phonemes and distorting them by combining them, say, with animal imitations or the high energy vernacular of a dozen different NY street cultures— but it was always infused with emotional intensity and a certain variety of timbre . . . some of the sounds he emitted could only be heard by dogs. In this way, I feel, his writing appeals to a broad range of people, and when read on the page feels a bit abandoned, as though the reader is getting only half of the dimensions; however, in "SandHommeNomadNo" this lack, or absence, is partially softened—just like life—by typography and in fact—the slowness with which the words are read gives them back the "meaning" they lose in performance.

So, is it six of one and half a dozen of the other? Or 12 of both, either way? And now for the real Steve Carllism, who was in the audience! There were so many people in the audience I didn't recognize half of them. Perhaps they were fans of the spoken word movement, and some were definitely students of Mills College and the Art Institute, places where Scalapino has been teaching lately. And of New College, because students there can get in free (this was a reading sponsored by Small Press Traffic.) I saw Pamela Lu, Rick London, Liz Willis, Peter Gizzi, Mary Margaret Sloan, Rodrigo Toscano, Hung Tu, Mary Burger, Lyn Hejinian, Simone Fattal, Bob Gluck, Jocelyn Sainenburg, Aaron Shurin, Hugh Steinberg, and sixty or seventy others.

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Re: People of Color

30 Sep 1997

The Naropa students, Rachel Levitsky among them, were arguing over the racial stereotypes in Stein's Melanctha. Kevin points a reader toward the book that had already thought it through.

At 3:30 AM -0400 9/30/97, Rachel Levitsky wrote:

Ish thought Wright must have been blackmailed or something and the rest of us went about defending it all. Yet since the class and having read the piece, I am a bit confounded. Stein's stereotyping and blatant prejudices "Rose Johnson was a real black, tall, well built, sullen, stupid, childlike, good looking negress" seem to be a mix of her usual subverting and some truly skewed and limited observations. Do listlings have more information about it? Is there anywhere where Stein herself describes what she is trying to do in Melanctha? Critiques? Controversies over Wright's support?

Dear Rachel, if I were you I would try to get a copy of Aldon Nielsen's book "Reading Race" . . . a marvelous book which includes a chapter, or I guess part of a chapter, on just this controversy. He explores the historical background behind various black writers' endorsement of "Melanctha" (and other works by Gertrude Stein) and he can hardly write a sentence which isn't interesting all by itself. Beyond Stein he goes through the whole catalogue of US modernists and shows, one by one, how every one of them (OK a few exceptions) lets us down, or lets themselves down, on racial issues. Some amazing surprising stuff there. If you cannot find it at Naropa library or local library or bookstore let me know I will send you section on "Melanctha." Nielsen is actually on the Poetics list and if he were a gentleman, and not such a shrinking violet, he would send you the address of the publisher, thus increasing his readership base, possibly his royalties too, tho' that's far fetched. In any case I know you, Rachel, will thoroughly enjoy this book.

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The year's last traffic from the account was not Kevin's at all but a relay of the appeal that circulated as Kathy Acker lay dying in a Tijuana clinic; she was gone by the end of November. It has been kept to the catalogue, though the room plainly felt her leaving.

1998

Under the Influence

12 Jan 1998

Rabih Alameddine had started a monthly series at A Different Light on Castro Street, each writer speaking on an influence; Kevin drew the opening night. Sir Terence Rattigan, the well-made-play craftsman he chose, was by 1998 the sort of midcentury name a poetics list would need reminding of.

Hello everyone, it's Kevin Killian. Hope some of you are in the Bay Area and free on Wednesday. There's a new monthly series at the "Different Light" bookstore on Castro Street, called "Under the Influence," curated by Rabih Alameddine, who has asked different writers to talk about writers who have influenced their own work. I think Bob Gluck will speak about Kathy Acker, and Etel Adnan on Marguerite Yourcenar, in months to come, but more to the point this Wednesday, Jan 14, I, I, Kevin, will kick off the series by speaking on Sir Terence Rattigan. Norma Cole, Rex Ray, Wayne Smith and I will be acting out scenes from Rattigan's 1950 drama "The Deep Blue Sea." You don't want to miss me essaying "Hester Collyer," the tragic heroine first made famous by Vivien Leigh, do you (7:30 p.m.)?

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the older gals

29 Jan 1998

Gary Sullivan had wondered aloud about a forthcoming Talisman anthology of women poets; Kevin, who kept the whole small-press calendar in his head, knew the one he meant.

Gary Sullivan (hi Gary!) wrote:

Talisman also has planned, I think, an anthology of women poets, probably concentrating on 40s & upwards—though I have no details on that one, either.)

That's *Moving Borders: 25 Years of Innovative Writing by Women*, edited by Mary Margaret Sloan. A huge book. I believe it starts with Niedecker and works its way up to Lisa Robertson—and contains essays as well as "work." It will be out in March. Small Press Traffic will be having a big book party for it Thursday April 9.

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Missing generation

30 Jan 1998

Katy Lederer had proposed that the language poets' severity drove a generation of young writers out of San Francisco, and noted the strange scarcity of poets between thirty-five and forty-five. Kevin was forty-five himself, and had watched that generation from inside it — and just up from years in Spicer's life, he had his own accounting of the gap. It is his longest answer of the year.

Katy Lederer wrote: "a number of primarily male language poets in the 70s and 80s basically drove an entire generation of young writers out of San Francisco because they were so critical of them. Etc. I believe this stuff because I hear it from people who know—and also because of the strange absence of young "experimental" poets between the ages of 35 and 45 in SF..."

This is Kevin Killian (aet 45) . . . Like Katy I too have often noticed the strange absence to young "experimental" poets between the ages of 35 and 45 in SF. I think she's right on the money there, there is a great gap that exists, and I too have often speculated on the reasons why. But Katy, I don't buy the explanation that male language poets drove these people out of the city [OKAY I CAN THINK OF 1 or 2], and I wonder who the "people who know" who told you this might be! Many writers left the Bay Area for the same reason you did—because after Berkeley, what else is there? But there are other reasons too for this gap. Not only in poetry, not only in all the arts, but in every occupation or avocation, there's a missing generation, men and women who might have been 35 to 45 today but who instead died of AIDS. The new wave of miracle drugs that began circa 1991 have slowed the progress of HIV through the body, enabling seropositive people to live longer and more productive lives; but before that, it was like, you got the virus, you died, wham. And many, many of the promising

poets and writers in San Francisco, where we enjoy and sometimes even reify our drug use and high risk behaviors, simply died instead of filling the gap that you and I both see.

There's another explanation too and that is IMHO many poets just simply stop writing around the age of 30 or 35. The younger poets who you would kill for now are an exciting crew, but in ten years a third of them will have given up poetry not due to squelching criticism, just due to — mmm, it's hard to say why. [A second third will have taken their writing into directions you will no longer respect.] I notice this not only in my own generation (since many of the writers whom I thought were genius, when I first moved to San Francisco in 1980, are now silent) (and of course many of them dead) but in other generations too. (Writing the life of Jack Spicer I saw how many brilliant poems were written by young men and women who were between the ages of 20 and 35 in the forties, fifties, sixties, and then for various reasons just stopped, period). I wonder, looking at an anthology like Juliana's and Peter's "Writing from the New Coast" how many of the poets even in that book—who were the younger poets of five years ago—have since stopped writing. Or, as I look back on the poets Dodie Bellamy and I have published in our zine, "Mirage #4/Period[ical]," hundreds of them by now, and half of them must have been under thirty, I look at the earlier issues and I go into a melancholy mist thinking, Too bad X decided to become a full-time programmer, Too bad Y decided to write for cable TV. Tell you what, back channel me with your list of the young poets of today who are writing the most exciting work and I'll keep it for ten years, then you and I, sitting on our rockers, will uncover the time capsule and work out who is still writing, what they're writing, and who went on with it.

And one more thing, the absurd length of this post, it would be just as fair to say that the language poets were themselves driven out of San Francisco: one by one they all left us—though your advisors might say that this is what has made the current re-birth of new poetry here possible?

And finally, and this is not only for Katy, but if any of you on this List don't have that copy of Philly Talks with Ron Silliman and Jeff Derksen, let me know (back channel) and I'll send it to you as supplies hold out. It's really interesting and I personally would enjoy a wider discussion of Jeff's announcement of the tendency, among "emerging" writers, "toward a poetics of disgust and overdetermination."

Okay, see you. XXX Kevin K.

P.S., Aldon, if Shauna Hannibal and Giovanni Singleton are between the ages of 35 and 45, then a) so are, mmm, the boys in Hanson . . . b) get me the phone

numbers of their dermatologists and or surgeons . . . c) it must be true what they say about how living close to the water keeps you preternaturally young . . .

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Tripwire

04 Mar 1998

Tripwire was a new poetics journal out of the Mission, edited by Yedda Morrison and David Buuck and stocked with poets a generation younger than Kevin — the very cohort he had been puzzling over since January.

Hi everyone it's Kevin Killian . . . I wanted to add my 25 cents and recommend the new poetics journal "Tripwire" (very mindful that the "old" Poetics Journal is coming to an end soon with its final issue). . . . Living here in San Francisco I have long suspected there was a new generation of poets with ideas and formulations very different than my own, and "Tripwire" is now my handbook, as an anthropologist would have his handbook . . . It's quite wonderfully edited, by Morrison and Buuck, always something interesting on almost every page, especially the theoretical and critical work. And many of the writers are new to me—yes, there is a foregrounding of the "new,"—with Myung Mi Kim presiding over the "new" in this vatic, patient way. Anyhow it's well worth six dollars, I say, go for it. Schultz' essay about the difficulties of being a working-class avant-garde writer is the finest I've ever read on the topic. Robert Hale's and David Buuck's essays are also very fine on the exhaustion of the approach to a degree zero of writing—Many of these young people seem to have embarked on some kind of writing degree that presents itself, in "Tripwire," as a kind of grail of disgust. "Writing degree" = "zero"? Sherry Brennan's overview of some recent books of poetry is good also, very intriguing---though I wonder, given the fact that there are so many good poets today, yet so few books published, that another review of *Some Other Kind of Mission*, *In Memory of My Theories*, *Imagination Verses*, *Metropolis* and *Response*—won't throw their authors into some kind of canon from which it would be difficult to unseat oneself—They are so young and already they (and Myung Mi Kim) are the gods of "Tripwire" . . . it's interesting.

tripwire is a new poetics journal edited by Yedda Morrison & David Buuck. Issue one is aprox. 150 pages, including an interview with Myung Mi Kim, and work by Noah de Lissovoy, Eleni Sikelianos, Kathy Lou Schultz, Rodrigo Toscano, Sarah Anne Cox, Eliazabeth Robinson, Tan Lin, Jocelyn Saidenberg & Brian Strang, Robert Hale, Tim Davis, Elizabeth Treadwell, Sarah Rosenthal, Dana Lomax, Thiagarajah Selvanithy, Sherry Brennan, Mark Wallace, and others. It includes essays, "work," artwork, reviews, and more.

\$6 for one issue / \$10 for two --- Published biannually

tripwire c/o Morrison & Buuck 722 Shotwell #4 SF CA 94110

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Nepotistic plug

18 Mar 1998

The Sarah Jones here is Kevin's cousin — the slam champion and monologist who would later reach Broadway — and the plug is exactly as nepotistic as its subject line promises.

Nepotistic plug from Kevin Killian to all New Yorkers . . . I hope you find the time to see "Surface Transit: sketches of ordinary people" at the Nuyorican Poets Cafe (236 East Third Street between B and C) on March 19, 20, 21 at 7:30.... It is the one woman show of my cousin, Sarah Jones, "winner of the 1997 Grand Slam"

Different styles, same genetic code!!!

For reservations call [REDACTED]

I won't be there but please tell me how you like it

Thanks everyone--- Kevin K.

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Another plug (non-nepotistic), for SWARM

21 Mar 1998

Camille Roy was a fellow San Franciscan of the New Narrative circle, and SWARM her new book of stories from a small local press; Kevin is doing here what he did most tirelessly, which was carry a friend's book to the room.

This is Kevin Killian—recommending a new book you can order through the mail. Black Star Series announces the publication of SWARM, a book of stories by Camille Roy.

The book design (by Jay Schwartz) utilizes color xerography, letter press, and offset to striking effect: SWARM bears resemblance to a lesbian rug.

Here is Susan Smith Nash (in WITZ) on Camille Roy's previous book, "The Rosy Medallions": "This is the language of the socially-constructed (or deconstructed) self bared naked so that you're forced to see your own violences... If Henry Miller were a smart, funny lesbian and he were rewriting The Rosy Crucifixion, this is what might result. Brilliant insights into the savage dynamics of love."

SWARM is available from Small Press Distribution ([REDACTED]), or by mail, for ten dollars (\$10) inclusive of shipping, handling, and tax, from

Black Star Series
1419 20th Street
San Francisco, CA 94107

Remember, when you order this book from Black Star Series, make checks payable to Megan Adams. I would say, get many copies, you can give them out as graduation presents too, or Mother's Day also.

Thanks everyone (but you'll thank me)—!

KK

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Re: Alien thoughts

06 Apr 1998

Karen Kelley had asked the list, half-apologizing for it, for reading on what extraterrestrials might mean to us; the question could hardly have found a better correspondent.

Karen Kelley wrote . . .

This is perhaps a strange request: last night I had the most remarkable dream about extraterrestrials (something I've never dreamed about before) perhaps masquerading as god figures, but it occurs to me that I've always been too cynical to do more than assume extraterrestrials must exist. Does anyone have any reading to suggest? I'm not particularly interested in "proof" stories or "scary alien" stories, perhaps something more along the lines of what they might represent to us philosophically/psychologically?

Katy's already suggested Spahr's book "Response" which is a good one. Let me recommend a novel "Mysterious Skin" by a young New Yorker Scott Heim, it is really terrific and is totally about the psychological appeal of aliens, why we need them, etc. When I was almost 30 I came to "realize" that I had been abducted by aliens briefly in childhood, and I drew upon this experience to write a memoir "Santa," which now appears in my book "Little Men" (which of course you don't want to miss in any case). I got some of it right, but Scott and Juliana get more of it.

—Kevin Killian <---- space "cadet" fanboy

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more readings you don't want to miss

20 Apr 1998

He was about to head east — his brother's wedding in the Bronx, and a string of readings on either side of it. Dodie's The Letters of Mina Harker was just off the Hard Press, and he had a new play to stage along the way.

Hi everyone, it's Kevin Killian. Thanks to all who replied to my plea for someone to come stay in my apartment while I'm out of town next week. Yes, we have

several winners who will arrive in shifts, to take care of our two cats, Blanche and Stanley. I'm sure you all have heard the story about how I inserted their names "Blanche and Stanley" into the popular anagram program on the web and the first thing that came up was "Channeled by Satan" (!!!) but that is a calumny of the alphabet, they are sweet and timid, like field mice or lilies.

Anyhow while I'm there, back east, at my brother's wedding in the Bronx, Dodie Bellamy and I will also be reading at the Poetry Project at St Marks on Wednesday April 29th (2nd Avenue at East 10th Street). Dodie's novel "The Letters of Mina Harker" will be hot off the presses by then (Hard Press) and she will be reading from it. "The Letters of Mina Harker is a great book in every respect," says Dennis Cooper. "Mesmerisingly secretive, yet huge and generous in scope, it's a dazzling stylistic and intellectual feat down to its tiniest syllables and asides, and almost sure to be one of the touchstones of contemporary fiction. Mark my words."

Then the intermission and then I come on with my short play "Cut," the Alfred Hitchcock story, staged reading with a cast of NY poets, painters, and novelists: D-L Alvarez, Bruce Andrews, Lee Ann Brown, Tim Davis, Kenward Elmslie, Eileen Myles, Sianne Ngai, Michelle Rollman, Eleni Sikelianos, Lynne Tillman, Laurie Weeks and Joe Westmoreland; and myself. A discontented faculty wife (Myles) embarks on a sultry affair with a young cub reporter (Davis), while her husband (Elmslie), director of the Berkeley Film Commission, plans a theory-heavy salute to the films of Alfred Hitchcock (also played by Davis). In another plot line, couture king Karl Lagerfeld (Andrews) descends onto Berkeley to dethrone Lancome spokesmodel Isabella Rossellini (Tillman) and replace her with the younger, Bard-educated Chita du Sumatra (Rollman).

Then onto Washington D.C. where we will read again on Saturday, May 2 at 7:30 p.m. at the Ruthless Grip Art Project, 1508 U Street NW, near the corner of U and 15th. Dodie will again read from her cornerstone of contemporary fiction, and I will be reading from my own work, and also first reading of the newly discovered "3Fix Poems" of Jack Spicer, discovered in November 1997 and soon to be published as a book by Steven Clay of Granary Books (with pictures by Fran Herndon). Sure to cause a stir on the Beltway and we are inviting Monica Lewinsky too.

Sorry to make this post so long—you can see I don't get out much.

Kevin

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Vs. Spicer

28 May 1998

Poet Be Like God — the Spicer biography he had written with Lewis Ellingham, and had been dunning the list for help on for the better part of a decade — was finally reaching stores from Wesleyan. The early notices were not all kind, and Kevin, who felt them as a partisan for Spicer more than for himself, answers them here.

Hi everyone it's Kevin Killian. Naturally interested in the discussion around Spicer. And very thrilled because the people from Wesleyan sent me an advance copy of the book the other day . . . so I can carry it around on buses, etc., make people want to read it. They say it will be in the stores in 2 weeks. (This book, for list members who are curious, is "Poet Be Like God: Jack Spicer and the San Francisco Renaissance," by me and Lewis Ellingham.)

Anyway, yes, it is disheartening that Kirkus Reviews printed the paragraph it did—even more so that Amazon.com features this review right under the part where it says, "Find out more about this book"! There's an equally dismissive review in "Library Journal," which covers not only my book but Peter Gizzi's edition of Spicer's lectures "The House that Jack Built" (also from Wesleyan), noting that Lew, Peter and I all live in California and *that's* why we are working under the assumption of Spicer's worth when he's so unpleasant. This review was signed, by David Kirby, Florida State University, Tallahassee, and I'd appreciate directions to his house if anyone has them. To send him ninjas, etc. under cover of the great Florida night.

However Publishers Weekly printed a great review, written by a young New York poet (of genius)—my new best friend—a man with astute vision and discernment—a man I plan to marry within the next few months . . . just kidding . . . but only a little . . .

What are you going to do? These reviews are indeed based, as Maria has said, on the aversion of the reviewers to something new, and they find it preposterous that a man they have never heard of is having whole books written about him. This shaking up of the canon is kind of discomfiting, I suppose. Wesleyan could have published a life of John Berryman instead, but no, they are gambling, perhaps, on Jack Spicer.

The man of the hour. I appreciated the *Lingua Franca* article "Radiohead" much more than did Mark Prejsnar . . . The writer, John Palatella, had to address a general intellectual audience, perhaps one largely unfamiliar with poetry, and he did a bang up job IMHO. Always I've wanted to appear in "*Lingua Franca*," but, not being in the academy saw little chance of it, having no students to harass, etc.

Jumping on band wagon, "Grand Street" will be printing two of the newly discovered Spicer poems in their next issue to appear momentarily. So that's good news.

I am so happy that the biography is finally on the verge of appearing. Over the years I've bugged everyone on the list asking for help of one kind or another, and so many of you came through for me, and therefore let me thank all of you for your kindness and forbearance and aid. Even those of you who never post any more, be happy for me, XXX Kevin K.

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Inferno, Succubus, Gates of Hell and More

03 Jul 1998

This is Kevin in his other congregation — the Euro-horror repertory of Argento, Bava and Fulci — talking the poets into a summer of midnight screenings.

If you live in the Bay Area or will be visiting this month, the Center for the Arts (701 Mission Street) is having a film series every Friday night and will be showing some rarely-screened classics of Euro-horror, leading off with Dario Argento's "Inferno" (1980) (July 10) and winding up with a double bill of Mario Bava's "Hercules in the Haunted World" (1961) and "Danger: Diabolik" (1968, also by M. Bava) on the 31st. And don't forget, every Friday and Saturday at midnight this month, the Castro Theater is showing Lucio Fulci's restored "The Beyond" (1981). So . . . call me, let's go!

Kevin ("Giallo") Killian

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Olson/Ojai

13 Jul 1998

Christopher Alexander had turned up a cryptic line in Olson and asked the Californians to gloss it; Kevin, who had made the pilgrimage to Ojai himself as a boy, was well placed to answer.

Christopher Alexander wrote:

Recently ran across this mysterious reference in Olson:

*"San Francisco seems to have become an école
des Sages ou Mages as ominous as Ojai, L.A."*

*Any of you historically-minded californians (or anyone)
out there know what the man is referring to? help wld be
much appreciated...*

c h r i s

Stupidly I loaned my copy of *The Collected Prose of Charles Olson* (Univ of California Press 1997) to someone undeserving of it, but that's the place to start for the explications of this passage from "Against Wisdom as Such." Donald Allen and Benjamin Friedlander who edited the book have such wonderful notes I'd be surprised if all is not explained therein. And so I don't remember, though they will, what is the reference to the "Ecole des Sages or Mages" (what French group Olson's speaking of). He must have been writing in 1952 or 1953 and at that time Ojai was the center, as it still is, of the US Theosophist movement, and Krishnamurti lived there, and Olson is here deriding the propensity of the intellectuals who flocked round the big K (Huxley, Isherwood, Heard, etc) to lose their sense of balance when confronted with K's holy wisdom. Olson's reading of San Francisco as a kind of Ojai North was of course a challenge to Duncan, a fruitful one it seems to me, tho Duncan admitted nothing and apologized for nothing, but went on to flaunt his own mysticism in ways greater and grander than anything he had done before. ("The Opening of the Field" can be read as Duncan's answer to Olson's charges in "Against Wisdom as Such." I think parts of Spicer's "Language" are also written with this essay in mind.)

I remember first coming here to California when I was a boy and going first straight to Santa Monica to pay homage to Isherwood and then to Ojai to see Krishnamurti. I was so high I'm surprised I didn't tumble off a cliff, or perhaps I did—like Madeleine, or Judy, in "Vertigo."

xxx Kevin Killian

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forgotten women

18 Jul 1998

The thread had turned to the women of the San Francisco Renaissance and how poorly the histories had kept them; Mark Prejsnar had raised Michael Davidson's account of Joanne Kyger, and Kevin, fresh from the Spicer years, knew the archive.

Mark Prejsnar wrote—

Didn't Michael Davidson give Kyger quite a lot of respectful attention in her own right, in his book, the San Francisco Renaissance?? This is Kevin Killian. Mark, you're 100% right, and even better than Michael's version of Kyger is his reading of Helen Adam. Honestly I think it must have been the first account of her work to take it seriously and to place it into the context of the currents from which, at first glance, she and her work seem so distant. [Michael Davidson, "The San Francisco Renaissance: Poetics and Community at Mid-century" (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1989)] Gwyn, thank you for your kind words about the book Lew Ellingham and I have written on Spicer "Poet Be Like God". Where I disagreed with Michael D is in his underlying thesis, I don't think it's ever stated explicitly, that Spicer's fears of women and their sexuality precluded him and his circle from supporting and engaging in the work of the women poets of

the period, and also the great female modernists of the 20th century that preceded his own work. Michael and I were both lucky in that Kyger's papers are so marvelously available to the public at the grand Archive for New Poetry at UCSD, they are a great collection and make her life in the 50s and 60s a total open book; lucky also that she is still alive and among us and so helpful to researchers and critics and biographers. In the case of Adam, whose papers are at Buffalo, I expect wonderful things from the work that Kristin Prevallet has been conducting on her the past few years. And there's a biography being written about Ruth Witt-Diamant, the impresario of the SF State Poetry Center, whose career Lew and I sketch out in "Poet Be Like God." The strangest case of "forgotten women" in the Spicer crowd is that of Jamie MacInnis, the super-talented San Francisco-born poet with whom Spicer became acquainted in his final years. She lived on after him and continued to write some stunning poems, but nobody now knows where she is or even if she's alive or dead!

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The list thinned through August, as it always did. Somewhere in the quiet Poet Be Like God at last reached the stores — the Spicer life he had spent the better part of a decade soliciting the room's help for — and Kevin came back in the fall to the ordinary business of glossing a poet and filing a hall.

PESSOA

13 Sep 1998

David Buuck, writing as 'T. Bartleby Jones,' had noted how readily heterosexual readers had claimed Fernando Pessoa for their own; the poet's sexuality was the thread, and Kevin knew the gay-literary reference shelf by heart.

On Fri, 11 Sep 1998 "T. Bartleby Jones" (██████████) wrote about the ways in which later 20th century heterosexuals have taken Fernando Pessoa as one of their own, giving him an enviable sexual afterlife . . . We might also take a look at Donald Mager's entry on Pessoa in the "Gay and Lesbian Literary Heritage" (Henry Holt, 1995) in which FP is refigured into a kind of Portuguese Langston Hughes, refined, dandyish, left-leaning, virginal, but obsessed, in his English poems, with A E Housman, Hadrian, Antinous, and (as "Alvaro de Campos") with the shamanic gay interpenetrative spirit of Walt Whitman.

His heteronyms, etc., in this essay seen as a species of drag performativity.

But I know next to nothing about Pessoa and perhaps there really was an "Ophelia."

See you . . .

Kevin Killian

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October 3 "Cirque de Soiree" in San Francisco

29 Sep 1998

Small Press Traffic was Kevin's other life's work, and its annual benefit auction the kind of high-and-low variety show he loved to run and to bill.

Hi everyone, it's Kevin Killian. On Saturday October 3rd here in San Francisco we're having a big fundraiser for Small Press Traffic Literary Arts Center. It'll be at New College (766 Valencia, between 18th and 19th) between 4:00 and 9:00 p.m.

I hope all of you who are free that day and will be nearby will come. "Cirque de Soiree" is our fourth annual literary "soiree" & auction and you're guaranteed lots of fun. Tickets are on a sliding scale, you can pay as little as \$10 or as much as \$1000. Here are some of the highlights:

This year we honor six local writers, the biographers Diane Wood Middlebrook, John Felstiner, and Millicent Dillon; the novelist Michael Nava; and the poets Kathleen Fraser and Clark Coolidge . . . all have promised to show up, live, in person, and Kathleen will read.

Tons of food donated by the top restaurants, delis, groceries and health food stores of the Mission! Live music by all these different local acts! Palm reading! Cash bar!

Poets' Theater: my own play, directed by me, "The House of Forks" with a cast of Bay Area's greatest and hammiest talents, including Edmund Berrigan, Taylor Brady, Maxine Chernoff, Norma Cole, Renee Gladman, Lauren Gudath, Kevin Killian, Nathen Lever, Yedda Morrison, Ed Moyer, Jocelyn Saidenburg, and Elizabeth Treadwell. You won't believe your eyes and ears.

Manuscript Auction: From the high to the low and back of contemporary literature. Catalogue available . . . E-mail me or call me if you want a copy.

Books signed by Paul Auster, William Bronk, William S. Burroughs, Allen Ginsberg, Nikki Giovanni, Stephen King, Gary Snyder, Gertrude Stein, . . . and we are so pleased by being able to auction off our great gift from Granary Books, the incredible "KIN" collaboration between Anne Waldman and Susan Rothenberg. (Thank you Steve Clay for this and many other books from Granary.)

MORE! Signed broadsides, graphic works, photographs, etc., other memorabilia from Robert Creeley, Ronald Johnson, Amy Tan, Robert Berg & Robin Blaser, Ray Bradbury & Jill Krementz, Julia Child, David Cronenberg, Sandra Dee, Robert Duncan & Jess, Greg "Luann" Evans, Alice Notley, and Anne Rice—the Queen of the Night . . .

Manuscript material from Anne-Marie Albiach (yikes! The entire manuscript of "A Geometry"—in French!), Will Alexander, Djuna Barnes, Paul Cadmus, Anne Carson, Noam Chomsky, Clark Coolidge, Lydia Davis, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, William Gibson, Barbara Guest, Thom Gunn, Fanny Howe, Kenneth Koch, Dean Koontz, Carole Maso, Jan Morris, Michael Ondaatje, and Phyllis A. Whitney . . . Yes the high and the low! And yes you can afford any of these items! Walk away with your own copy of the "Making of Americans" signed by Stein! Or whatever.

And maybe you'll get lucky with our raffle, many valuable prizes, many lucky winners. So, all of these things will be happening simultaneously this Saturday October 3rd, between 4 & 9, for more information, call [REDACTED].

Or, back channel me with all of your questions. Thanks everybody. I want you all to know that our volunteer committee of 29 people have been working for months to show you a real good time, and all the proceeds go to help the cause of poetry and poetics here in San Francisco at Small Press Traffic. So come on down!

Thanks again . . . Kevin K.

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Laura [Riding] Jackson conference question

14 Oct 1998

Reports had been drifting in from a Laura Riding Jackson conference at Cornell — Riding being the poet who renounced poetry and guarded her bracketed name like a moat. Kevin, who had missed it, answers in the only currency he had.

Hi everyone, it's Kevin Killian. Thanks to all the people who attended the Laura Riding Jackson conference at Cornell for their reports, which really made me feel as though I were there, it sounds like an amazing event from any perspective. I remember once writing a play in which a mad scientist, yearning to return to the prelapsarian days when people had only one name, devised a doomsday-type machine to destroy all humans with two names, but instead he pressed the wrong button and the only people left alive on earth were those with three names, so the main characters became Olivia Newton-John, Joel-Peter Witkin, Mary Tyler Moore, Tommy Lee Jones, Andrew Lloyd Webber, Jennifer Jason Leigh and Laura [Riding] Jackson who, due to these improved conditions, gave her first poetry reading since 1938, from her front porch in Florida, where all had gathered. Laura Moriarty played this difficult part with all of Riding Jackson's saltiness and pepperiness. Sounds like I should have asked "the Board" for their permission, but what *is* "the Board, can anyone fill me in? Thanks . . .

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Spicer's Lorca

23 Oct 1998

Kent Johnson had asked, in a Spicer thread, whether anyone had ever mapped which passages of After Lorca were truly translation and which invention; Kevin points him to the source, and then, as ever, to his enemies.

Dear Kent . . . others will probably reply to this one too, but the article you're thinking of is by Clayton Eshleman and it's called "The Lorca Working," first printed in "Boundary 2," Vol. VI, #2, fall, 1977. Really an intriguing article and quite complete. If you want me to send you a copy let me know.

Kevin Killian <---terribly glad to hear the news that Lisa Robertson's book "Debbie:an Epic" has been nominated for Canada's Governor Generals Award in Poetry. Could this have happened in the US? I don't think so. Go Lisa go!

Kevin Killian <--- crying over awful review in the "Vancouver Sun" which Donald Allen forwarded to me, review of "Poet Be Like God," a life of Jack Spicer which I wrote with Lew Ellingham, review which calls book "inept faggot gossip." Under cover of night I am sending ninjas to Canada, to homes and dwelling places of rival contestants for Governor Generals Award and also to "John Armstrong," reviewer for "Vancouver Sun." If you are on this list, "John Armstrong," be afraid. Be really afraid!

Dear Jonathan:

I noticed your response to Gabriel Gudding on the Spicer line. Do you in fact know of anyone who has done a poem by poem study of _After Lorca_ to figure out where the "translations" are translations and where they are not? Or in those poems that are "minotaurs," which parts are which? I seem to recall seeing something about Robin Blaser having at least gone into this, but I'm not sure. Have you, by some chance, done this yourself? I've been working on and off on an essay on JS's _After Lorca_ and would be very interested if you or anyone would know something about this.

Kent

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Spicer, Foster, Notley, Mac Adams

24 Oct 1998

Kent Johnson had flagged an out-of-print Ed Foster pamphlet on Spicer and wondered why the biography hadn't cited it; the reply runs on into a week of San Francisco readings Kevin could not keep himself from reporting.

Kent Johnson writes:

By the way, the bibliography [of "The House That Jack Built"] also mentions a wonderful pamphlet written a few years ago by Ed Foster, entitled simply _Jack Spicer_. It's the first citation I've seen of this furtive little gem (wondering why it wasn't listed in _Poet be Like God_?) and some of you may want to track it down. It's published by Boise State, of all places.

Hi, it's Kevin Killian. Edward Halsey Foster's little hand book in the Boise State "Western Writers Series" (1991) really is a terrific one, though if I remember correctly when it came out Ed felt rather bitter about the fact that his editors had summarily cut out about a third of his text, which I have bugged him to show me, but he has strong opinions about or superstitions against revealing his unpublished work. Will I sound like a nit picker if I aver that this pamphlet is indeed cited in "Poet Be Like God," at least on page 381?

We have had some extraordinary poetic events lately here in San Francisco. The reading Alice Notley gave on Thursday for Small Press Traffic drew a huge audience, so that we had to keep adding more and more rows of chairs in front, and still more, so she was reduced to standing in one precise place, while people sat on either side and even behind her and the microphone, the stage looked like the end of "Carousel" where the graduates sing "You'll Never Walk Alone." Notley responded in kind by giving an amazing reading of parts of "Mysteries of Small Houses," then moved on to the noir pulp newsreader "novel," DISOBEDIENCE, and then scared everyone silly with the new "Byzantine" material, channeling voices a la Hannah Weiner or Tina Darragh and provoking a tremendously felt ovation. Some stood up, clapping, cheering, wiping tears from eyes, hollering hoarsely, as though Maria Callas had just left the stage.

Last night, Friday, the Poetics Program at New College brought Lewis Mac Adams here for a reading to launch his new book "The River" (Blue Wind Press). Mac Adams explained that he had been out of the circuit for many years (15?), had not published anything, had been devoting all his time to environmental causes, and had been coaxed back in to publishing and reading by Michael Price, Kevin Opstedal and Dale Smith who, between them (among them?) had returned him to writing. "The River" is a very fine book (and only six dollars) and my hat is off to Mac Adams for a grand return and to Mike, Kevin and Dale for doing a grand and honorable thing in provoking, assisting and facilitating this rebirth. The old "Bollinas" crowd was there in full force but I didn't see too many younger people, perhaps because the name "Lewis Mac Adams" has been nearly forgotten thanks to some principle of silence that Ron Silliman has no doubt written up wisely. Anyhow after these two last evenings of great emotion I look forward to tonight's Shurin/Moriarty event to complete this hat trick. Don't talk to me on Sunday, I'll be like this—drained out rag . . .

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and the winners are---

13 Nov 1998

Joe Amato had forwarded Publishers Weekly's best-poetry-of-1998 list, and Kevin — who could never let a roll call of books to love go by unanswered — countered with his own.

Joe Amato forwarded the list of the best books of poetry of 1998 as compiled by Publishers Weekly:

last chance for the tarzan holler, by thylas moss (braziller) _hay_, by paul muldoon (fsg) _mysteries of small houses_, by alice notley (penguin) _from the devotions_, by carl phillips (graywolf) _the bird catcher_, by marie ponsot (knopf) _an anthology of new (american) poets_, ed. lisa jarnot, leonard schwartz and chris stroffolino (talisman)

There are a lot of books I haven't gotten up to reading yet, but here are some that genuinely excited me in 1998:

"Free Space Comix" by Brian Kim Stefans (Roof) and "Multiple Poses" by Colin Smith (Tsunami Editions) . . . If I could do a tenth of what these 2 boys can do I'd be patting myself on the back all the time even in my sleep. If you haven't read these books go out and find them now. I babble about them constantly like St Paul after leaving Tarsus.

Ditto for "Debbie: an Epic" by Lisa Robertson (New Star Books), and "Maxfield Parrish" by Eileen Myles (Black Sparrow), but now I can't remember if they were published this year or last.

"Moving Borders" (ed. M. M. Sloan, Talisman House) was for me the signal anthology experience of the year.

"Routine Disruptions" by Kenward Elmslie (Coffee House)—though it leaves out a lot of my favorite poems by Elmslie I keep reading it again and again.

The three first books from the new Atelos Books are each, in their different ways, so excellent "Bad History" (Watten) "The I and the You" (Jean Day) and Rae Armantrout's incredible memoir "True"

Peter Gizzi's "Artificial Heart" from Burning Deck has a title I'm not crazy about, but what's inside is gorgeous.

Also want to mention a quintet of great books by SF Bay Area writers, "Mortal City" by Jocelyn Saidenberg (Parentheses Writing Series); "Dura" by Myung Mi Kim (Sun & Moon); "Dark," by Hoa Nguyen (okay, excuse me Austin people, but I don't want to accept that Hoa Nguyen has left us and moved to Texas); Laura Moriarty's "Spicer City" which has made San Francisco a fun place to live in again; and "Not Right Now" (Second Story Books) by Renee Gladman which I have raved about on this List before.

I'm forgetting lots of others so please, someone, pick up this thread and remind me, what have been *your* favorites in 1998?

Kevin Killian Oh my goodness, how could I forget the novel of the century "The Letters of Mina Harker" AND the best biography of the year "Poet Be Like God"? So you see, it's too early in the morning for me to be making up lists.

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Erasing

06 Dec 1998

The thread had reached Rauschenberg's erased de Kooning, and Dan Zimmerman had put the drawing in the wrong museum; Kevin, forever a partisan for San Francisco's acquisitions, sets the record straight.

From: Daniel Zimmerman [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] wrote: Also there is Rauschenberg's famous erasing of a de Kooning drawing. RR asked de Kooning for a drawing to be erased, and was given a mixed media thing because de Kooning wanted to make it a difficult process. RR apparently used about a dozen different kinds of erasers to get the job done, and he claimed it took him about a month to finish. I've never seen this piece reproduced or in any collection: it just exists for me as a rumor. Gary R. The Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo has it, I believe. Dan Zimmerman

No no Dan, it is not at Albright-Knox, it is (or will be shortly) here in San Francisco's Museum of Modern Art, hooray!! The Museum here has a new director the notorious David Ross lately of the Whitney and to welcome him the trustees must have spent a zillion dollars to buy all kinds of things, incl. the Erased de Kooning drawing (purchased directly from Rauschenberg) and San Francisco's first Eva Hesse, Mondrian, etc., some incredibly beautiful works. When I go to the museum now I feel sad because my favorite piece is on loan (Jackson Pollock's "Guardians of the Secret") for the big Pollock retrospective but on the other hand they have just acquired that famous Magritte one, mm, I can't remember what it's called ("Personal Values"? "Relative Values"?) but you know, the walls of the room look like the sky and there's a giant comb, shaving brush, pill, all leaning against the furniture of an ordinary bed sitting room.

Well, come on down everyone, to San Francisco and take a look. Besides the erased De Kooning drawing they also have the Rauschenberg piece where John Cage drove a truck over huge sheets of paper. Heavy metal thunder. Oh, and the original drawings ("they" say) for Duchamp's "Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even," even.

Evenly yours, Kevin Killian

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1999

"The Vegetable Kingdom"

13 Jan 1999

Kevin's plays for the Poets Theater were occasions unto themselves — a night's worth of San Francisco painters and poets conscripted as movie stars. This is him trailing the coat for a new one, written with the painter Rex Ray.

California College of Arts and Crafts 5212 Broadway @ College Oakland, CA 94618 For information [REDACTED]

January 20, 1999 8:00 p.m. Oliver Art Center, CCAC Institute presents

THE VEGETABLE KINGDOM A play by Kevin Killian and Rex Ray

In a last-ditch effort to stave off cancellation by the network, two producers of a sagging TV game show (THE VEGETABLE KINGDOM, kind of like JEOPARDY with vegetable questions) decide to switch its format to CELEBRITY VK, and try to enroll Linda McCartney and Yoko Ono as their celebrity contestants. Linda, holed up in her Meatless Mystery Ranch in Tucson, Arizona, dying of cancer, surrounded by her loyal staff of robots and animals, decides to take them up on their offer, believing that America is ready for evangelical vegetarianism. Yoko Ono, brooding over the career of her son, Sean, and the wayward history of the Fluxus movement, flies in from New York to Hollywood to appear on the program. Neither of them knows the other is going to be her opponent. War ensues both off-screen and on. This is a play about forgiveness, redemption, repressed memory, and the age-old question of how can we make this sorry old world a better place.

WORLD PREMIERE with Norma Cole, Kota Ezawa, Cliff Hengst, Scott Hewicker, Kevin Killian, Karla Milosevich, Rex Ray, Larry Rinder, Jocelyn Saidenburg, Mary Margaret Sloan and Wayne Smith. Mary Margaret Sloan makes her acting debut as Lee Meriweather, actress, former Miss America, former Catwoman on Batman, etc., etc. THIS PERFORMANCE FREE!

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Burns, Fodaski, Armantrout, Ortiz, in San Francisco

12 Feb 1999

Dodie Bellamy ran the reading series at Small Press Traffic; with her off in London, the week's announcements fell to Kevin — who was constitutionally unable to announce a reading without also praising it to the skies.

Hi everyone, it's Kevin Killian. With Dodie Bellamy in London I'll try posting some announcements in her place about the upcoming events at Small Press Traffic

here in San Francisco. First off is Friday February 12 (tonight) with Avery Burns and Elizabeth Fodaski.

Friday, February 12, 7:30 p.m. New College Theater 777 Valencia Street (San Francisco) \$5

Avery Burns Elizabeth Fodaski

No friend to linearity, Avery Burns was born in California 1961, and has edited the astonishing magazine "lyric&" since 1992. His publications include *Differing Senses of Motion*, *Sabin*, and *Fragments Formerly Attributed to Archilocus*. Recent work appears in *Chain*, *Lowghost*, *Idiom Online*, and *Poetry New York*. Burns' poetry, so fresh and so chiseled, extends the familiar trajectory of Melville-Pound-Williams-Creeley-Eigner-Grenier into new and exciting blips and scrawls of Typee/Omoo Pacific Rim chance operation Basho funk.

Elizabeth Fodaski's recent writing posits a little man in her head, "allied to Socrates," who's not especially reliable, kind, or perhaps good for a woman's peace of mind, a man who forces all kinds of questions and connections about invasion, possession, ownership and invention. "This is not your flowering flower found in a field you know." We have lost Hannah Weiner but now we have Liz Fodaski. Born and raised in New York City, where she still lives, Elizabeth Fodaski is a curator for the Segue Foundation's reading series at Double Happiness and the editor/publisher of *Torque*. She was a finalist for the National Poetry Series and has been published in *Lingo*, *Big Allis*, *Chain*, and *Mirage #4/Period(ical)*.

And now here's another reading that will take place next Friday, February 19, 1999:

Friday, February 19, 7:30 p.m. New College Theater 777 Valencia Street \$5

Rae Armantrout Travis Ortiz

Her newly published memoir, *True (Atelos)*, is an unsparing and wry account of a difficult childhood and questioning adolescence redeemed by a vocation to poetry. Since then she has written some of the finest poetry I know, mapping new routes to heaven and hell via daily life and its beautiful familiars, the plain, the orgiastic, the angry and the rueful. Rae Armantrout's recent books are *Necromance (Sun & Moon)*, *Made To Seem (Sun & Moon)*, writing the plot about sets (a Chax chapbook); *The Pretext* is forthcoming from Sun & Moon. Her work has appeared in numerous anthologies, including *In The American Tree*, *Best American Poetry of 1988*, *Postmodern American Poetry: A Norton Anthology*, *From The Other Side Of The Century*, *Out of Everywhere*, *Moving Borders: Three Decades of Innovative Writing By Women* and *Poems for the Millennium, Vol II*.

Her poems have recently appeared in such periodicals as *New American Writing*, *Conjunctions*, *Raddle Moon* and *Talisman*. Armantrout teaches in the writing program at UCSD.

Travis Ortiz' first book, *geography of parts*, has recently appeared from Melodeon Poetry Systems. What appeals to me about his writing is the ways in which complex relations among line, word, and image reveal themselves slowly, suspensefully, with the edges cut, the exposition delicious. For the first time I can see the white space between words take on meaning like one of those nature time-lapse sequences on public TV. Travis Ortiz is co-editor of Atelos Publishing Project. He also edits a series of short books of poetry that highlight the visual aspects of poetry called *ghos-ti* (an indo-european root pronounced "gaws-tee"). His poems has appeared in *Chain*, *Salt*, *Mirage #4/Period[ical]*, *Lyric&*, *River City*. His "text collages," or visual poems, have appeared in *Prosodia* and *Mirage*. He was a contributing editor for *Chain's* "Different Languages" issue.

There! That wasn't so hard. And of course if you are in London tonight you can go and see Dodie Bellamy reading, with Tim Atkins and Andrea Brady, at some reading space over there that I'm not familiar with. Alone here in San Francisco, eying the ocean, I feel like Mr. Norman Maine!

Thanks,
Kevin Killian

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Page Mothers Report, part 1

11 Mar 1999

The Page Mothers conference met at UCSD in March 1999 to take the measure of three decades of women's experimental poetry and publishing. Kevin went as Dodie's companion — a self-described male observer — and came home with a notebook he could not stop filling; this is the first of three dispatches.

I'll try to report on the Page Mothers conference at UCSD last weekend (March 5, 6, 7) but it will be from an oblique, Jamesian angle, since I certainly wasn't central to the events being a male observer, a novelist, hardly a poet at all and not much of a theorist. I left San Francisco with Dodie Bellamy and felt very much in her wake, and of course the natural sunlight and freshness of La Jolla gave me that old jaded feeling like an especially reptilian Norman Maine (not Bates). At the San Diego airport the feeling of dislocation began once I spotted Taylor Brady wandering around and I said, "What are you doing here at the airport?" and it turned out he had come to pick us up. (Throughout the whole weekend this feeling repeated itself, the rupture that comes of seeing one's friends from San

Francisco in a whole new light, a literal light, bright, serene, pale and unclouded.) We were staying at the Radisson La Jolla, a hotel at the foot of the campus near the Medical Center so you could walk back and forth from the conference to the hotel. And at 3:30 or so we boarded a shuttle with Mying Mi Kim and Standard Schaefer and wound up at the site, the huge strange library that rises up from the ground in layers of solar panels and black mirrors, to attend the cocktail (well, wine and cheese type) party that opened the conference. A few hours later Rae Armantrout gave a welcoming speech that hit most of the notes of congratulation, celebration, etc. Though throughout the weekend there was this constant note of warning that although women had "made it" in a certain way and their achievements over the past 30 years are undeniable, it might all be taken away at any moment by a new cultural upheaval. This theme came back in different ways many times, but none more clearly as when Armantrout told us the story of Hypatia who was an ancient Greek writer and librarian and publisher who founded a great library and then it was all destroyed and she herself torn to pieces by Christians.

The opening panel was called "A Little History." (All of the panels were conceived in very broad terms so that part of the fun was that you couldn't guess what X or Y would actually be talking about.) Michael Davidson's paper involved some transgender shenanigan frame in which we were invited to think of him as a kind of woman, this made some audience members restless if not actually confused, but basically it described the conception and writing and reception of Ntozake Shange's "For Colored Girls who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf." Kathleen Fraser spoke after him. The celebratory note of the conference was continued here, as in many other papers which were testimonial in nature, autobiographical accounts of how-I-founded-this-that-and-the-other-press. Simone Fattal was not on hand to read Etel Adnan's paper as both women found themselves unexpectedly called to Paris or Beirut, but Harryette Mullen came through and discussed a pair of books from the 70s that have not received much critical attention—buried treasures—books written by African-American women from an experimental and linguistically challenging stance, and Mullen focussed most of her paper on one of them, Fran Ross' "Oreo" of which I had never heard. Expect to hear more about this later. Finally, Patricia Dienstfrey ended the panel with an account of the operations of Kelsey St. Press of Berkeley and announced that Kelsey St. was roughly doubling up its publication schedule and will now be printing 4 books a year instead of 2. We heard so much about Fran Ross and Ntozake Shange that, walking after dark through the campus back towards the hotel, many were heard to wonder why they were not the guests of honor. We began to think of these writers in a different way and indeed, in the case of Ross, for the first time ever. (Mullen says she is at a preliminary stage of her quest for

Ross, she doesn't even know if she's alive or ever wrote anything else beyond the distinguished "Oreo.")

So, some people went to a restaurant Il Torino nearby but I had such a bad head ache I went back to the hotel and passed out and woke up around midnight and made Dodie watch "First Blood" (Rambo, Part I) with me, a great movie. Thus I was totally up for the next day's panels which began at 8:30. At 7:30 Maureen Owen and I found ourselves alone on the shuttle to the library so I introduced myself and then we went to the side entrance door of the library and pulled on it as instructed. What chaos since apparently it had been left unlocked all night long and the alarms sounded and a series of very Brechtian, David Bowie Station-to-Station strobe lights came on!! That woke me up but good. Luckily we were not arrested, though it was eerie being in the deserted library. I forgot to mention that all these panels were held at the "Geisel Room" named after the great benefactor to UCSD Theodor Geisel (Dr Suess) and the library was celebrating him by mounting a show of many of his original drawings and paintings, so it was Dr. Seuss everywhere. Panelists spoke in front of a large reproduction of the famous Cat in the Hat (teal, red, white stripes) who never looked more bizarre If you ask me. At 8:30 a respectable crowd arrived for the "Poetics" panel. Myung Mi Kim opened the event with a poetically written talk about fragmentation, mispoken or misheard syllables, the partiality of writing. Carla Harryman was energetic with a tremendously thought out account of poetics which I can't describe well or paraphrase, we will have to wait for the printed version of these papers to decide what exactly was being enacted. Brenda Hillman and Martha Ronk gave accounts of their own poetics, illustrated with their own poems, both were engaging and actually wonderful speakers,. but I could see the clock ticking away; already the panels were on overtime by the time Lyn Hejinian got up to speak. With her own eye on the clock she read rapidly from a series of notes (again, it will be great to read the whole paper) on different Greek concepts of writing pleasure. The third panel was about the canon, and this panel resembled a regular panel most of all due to the presence on it of actual literary critics and historians. Mary Margaret Sloan's paper on the "poem of dominion" was based on an essay she had written ten years before for "How/Ever," which she passed around. She discussed its fragmentary nature, an enactment of the poetics she wrote of, but said that part of its elliptical quality was based on fear, her own fear of being understood, and recounted to the amusement and horror of all several incidents from her own career in which various unnamed male poets treated her horribly. I recognized a few of these incidents myself. These unnamed men who said terrible things were wraiths at the conference, their voices acerbic, crackling and mean like the Grinch who Stole Christmas. One man told Sloan, who had embarked on her "Moving

Borders" project, "You're not smart enough to compile an anthology. You don't even know who Bjork is. You're too old, why don't you just die now?" So there was this moving image of being told to die that was quite affecting. There was also the sense that Sloan had raised the stakes by attesting to actual abuse or at any rate, a great opposition like Sauron waiting just outside the conference room doors.

Oh my, I can see I've been writing this, and not very well, for an hour and I have to leave to go to my office so I will continue tomorrow. There's more drama, rupture, ecstasy to come. But I did want to say right away that the spirit of celebration and optimism was made concrete by the way many people had brought or announced their new books and magazines just in time for this Conference, so it was like Christmas in a way for we got to see many new books, etc., gathered on these long tables in one corner of the Geisel Room and we all flocked around them to see what was new. In this spirit Dodie and I made a special issue of our zine, "Mirage #4/Period[ical]"—we had asked many Bay Area women poets/publishers/editors to give us one page of their current or representative creative work—even the ones who were not attending the Conference—and we gave copies of the assembled issue out free at the conference. To about eighty people. There are still some left, so if you contributed to this issue don't worry you'll get yours soon, and if any of you reading this wants a copy just write me please, back channel, and give your address, I'll send it to you.

—Kevin Killian

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Page Mothers Report, part 2

12 Mar 1999

The report resumes on the conference's second day, still filed from memory, adrenaline, and a great many photographs.

Hi everyone, it's Kevin Killian. I'm continuing with more of my on-scene action report from last weekend's "Page Mothers" conference at UCSD (USA) on March 5, 6, 7. I broke off right in the middle of the "canon" panel just as Maureen Owen was about to launch into her personal history of "Telephone" magazine and "Telephone" books. Christanne Miller and Lynn Keller next appeared together and divided their presentation into two halves, the first recounted rapidly the history of women editing projects in the era of, um, say 1915-1930, Margaret Anderson, Jane Heap, Lola Ridge, Kay Boyle, Sylvia Beach, Harriet Monroe etc etc, a dozen more, and showed how these women ushered on modernism in a large scale and how this tendency gradually faded away during the Depression

and the women themselves effaced as modernism became thought of as a totally male movement, their contributions forgotten or nearly so. Lynn Keller then performed the contrast of the 1990s and all were struck by the unusual similarities and differences between the two eras. It made your hair stand on end. The next panelist was Libbie Rifkin of the University of Alabama who gave, I thought, a great paper outlining, very subtly and seriously, the editing styles of Anne Waldman and Bernadette Mayer during the hey day of the 2nd NY School and how in the "World" Anne Waldman created this miniature universe of poets, all of whom could "fit in her bedroom," treating them all as creatures of rare fame and value, whereas Mayer, in *0 to 9* and *Unnatural Acts*, continually played with collaborative values of non-agency, anonymity, textuality, etc. I'm not doing this paper much justice but it was exhilarating to listen to. Then the morning was over and we went to lunch in the nearby Student Union and I took more photos.

God, did I take a lot of photos. The fourth panel was called "Mrs. Poetry" and was devoted to the work of Bernadette Mayer. It must have made some of the panelists nervous to have Mayer sitting right there in front of them grinning like a Cheshire cat. What if she took into her head to interrupt any of them while they spoke. I wouldn't have done this panel for 100 dollars, but I'm glad they took the Mayer challenge. Brad Westbrook introduced this panel pointing out that the Mandeville Collection which is directly behind the Geisel Room where we sat owns the Bernadette Mayer papers (1958-1995), and then Stephen Cope who had catalogued the papers for the Archive came up to the podium and gave his talk, announced as a kind of love song and indeed it was and then Lee Ann Brown's paper was similar, an alphabetical list of words and topics and titles on which she expanded from long memory, memoir, anecdote, and quotation. Most of us in the audience loved it. Leslie Scalapino followed with a disquisition on/against "lineage" which made some abrupt, mind boggling jumps among the work of Mayer, Rodrigo Toscano and Bob Grenier, warning us against the cult of personality in poetry and how the worship of the "Revered figure" could cloud our minds against the thought of the poem. This was hard to follow in parts but salutary, I suppose. Juliana Spahr had the difficult task of presenting a more conventional paper on Mayer's "Sonnets" but I thought it the most satisfying of the four talks and has made me re-read the Sonnets in a new way after hearing her and nodding and doors opening in my mind like Ingrid Bergman's dream in "Spellbound." Well done everybody.

The final paper was on the Future. Laura Moriarty's talk was on the possibilities of the internet, web, etc., but focussed on the tendencies of "avant-garde" poetry of merge together so that people are writing more and more like each other (provocative) and then rather chillingly said that the future is out of our hands

since the machines themselves, smart as they are, were planning, or perhaps not planning, even now to blend their technological knowledge with our human knowledge. I took this to mean that although we don't know it Bill Gates etc has already determined our future but afterwards she said, no, it was the machines themselves (shades of Dean Koontz' "Demon Seed" with my favorite Julie Christie.) Pamela Lu spoke on behalf of the Berkeley based Idiom collective. Faced with the incredible cheapness of web publishing the Idiom boys and girls were paradoxically tempted to spend incredible amounts of \$\$\$\$ on precious object/books, as one tendency prompted its exact opposite, an irreconcilable split in desires and needs. Renee Gladman's paper was an incendiary one in which she challenged the makers of anthologies to increase the percentage of writers of color in them. No longer would she put up with an anthology of 25 writers of whom 3 or 4 were people of color. (Was this the Talisman "New American Poets" anthology? The "Moving Borders" anthology? The conference itself? Well we all got the picture.) Dodie Bellamy spoke—oh, just brilliantly, of course! But she was overshadowed by the next speaker, Marjorie Perloff, who gave the talk that had many people livid afterward. (Though I missed part of it being so moved by Dodie's speech I had to have a cigarette outside the house of Seuss.) The hot points here were three, that much current work hailed as "innovative" is not—and she had this look in her eye as though she were hinting heavily that this was true of many of the writers in the room. The second point was that the so-called theory or criticism written by poets is horrible. She gave some examples, here naming names, such as Ann Lauterbach. The third hot point was her blanket pronouncement that "L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E" magazine had been a male-dominated oligarchy and that women had stayed out of the debate. Had stayed out of the "originary moment." As soon as it was over Carla Harryman stood up and said that although she had much respect for Perloff's accomplishments she (Perloff) had now damaged herself irretrievably in her (Harryman's) eyes by erasing the theoretical work done by women in the early years of the "Language" movement. One thing led to another and soon all were shouting, stabbing the air with hands, asking questions, firing off charges of "revisionism" on all sides, totally animated free for all. That the panels proper should end on this terribly heated note was exactly fitting, but it had an undertone of despair to it also, as though elements of doubt, overdetermination, fear had crept into the Geisel Room almost in a Trojan Horse way. Fate decreed it so, it was like the end of "Nightwood." Please understand that my misconstrual of these debates is not a purposive one, I didn't feel, even as it was happening, that I knew what was being enacted before my eyes. Others will have different takes on these events and all of them will be more accurate than mine. But I tried as best I could to grok it. Then it was time for dinner and we trooped off to the Faculty Club which was

about a quarter of a mile away, probably less by daylight. And after dinner there was a grand old-fashioned kind of reading by Maureen Owen and Bernadette Mayer. Well, I will have more to say later as I continue my account of the Conference, but I have to leave now to go to my office.

I've had quite a few requests to send out copies of the special "Page Mothers" issue of "Mirage #4/Period[ical]" . .. don't worry folks they will all get in the mail to you. A few wrote in to ask, well, what Bay Area writers are included? So here's the list: Dodie Bellamy, Mary Burger, Cydney Chadwick, Norma Cole, Beverly Dahlen, Patricia Dienstfrey, Kathleen Fraser, Susan Gevirtz, Lauren Gudath, Lyn Hejinian, Brenda Hillman, Myung Mi Kim, Pamela Lu, Laura Moriarty, Yedda Morrison, Rena Rosenwasser, Jocelyn Saidenberg, Leslie Scalapino, Kathy Lou Schultz, Mary Margaret Sloan, and Elizabeth Treadwell. If you write to me back channel please give your full address and then, all will be sent to you in due course.

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Page Mothers Report, part 3

13 Mar 1999

The last of the three dispatches. Mark Weiss had wondered aloud on the list whether the anxiety Kevin kept describing was really in the room; this is, in part, his reply.

Hi, it's Kevin Killian. This morning I will try to finish my report on last weekend's Page Mothers conference (March 5, 6, 7) at UCSD & I apologize for going on and on at such length (bandwidth) about it. The question of the tone that Mark Weiss didn't hear at the conference—the anxiety that women writers might lose the ground they've recently gained—well, it's funny, because I felt it throughout, from Hejinian's exhortations that every day one must wrest victory from defeat and fight all over again, to the constant use of the word "erasure," which one heard again and again (e.g. Harryman accusing Perloff of having erased the work of every woman in the room) and then in Dodie's speech to the conference of course, she evoked the spectre of Marc Lepine, the Canadian engineer who in early December 1989 walked into the University of Montreal and killed 14 women, and wounded a dozen others, simply because feminism had ruined his life. (Dodie spoke in the context of backlash in general, particularly a weird phone message she got at her office accusing her of feminism for having invited nine women to read at Small Press Traffic during this month and next.) (Check it out.) But I do appreciate that all of us who were at the conference came away with different takes on it and I hope that my example will show that hey, write something about it, it doesn't have to be complete, nor even interesting per se.

So, there we were in this luxurious faculty club listening to Maureen Owen read, I had never heard her before, nor even realized that her many of her poems have alternate titles, nor the funky surrealism of her poetry, sometimes charming, sometimes a little Brautigan-esque. The showpiece was a longer and more intense poem about another true crime, a Muslim NY woman who, not wanting her children to grow up in a racist world, pushed them out of the window of their 12th story apartment building, this chilling poem very much in the Sapphire vein that looked deep into a disturbed mind and located the listener there, identification and analysis hand in hand. When Bernadette Mayer began reading the crowd really sat up and cheered. She too read of a crime, the poem she wrote for Scott Gibson's forthcoming "Blood and Tears" anthology of poems for Matthew Shepard, the young gay student who was beaten to death in Laramie late last year, his body left tied to an old fence so that passersby thought he was a scarecrow. Perhaps for many of us this was our first exposure to Mayer, so she embodied something of the "revered figure" that Leslie Scalapino had warned us about earlier, the living legend. Her "livingness" also, miraculous as it seems after her near-fatal stroke a few years back, and her remarkable recovery, has to it a Gothic edge, like the Ancient Mariner (though she's not exactly old of course), perhaps we are simultaneously drawn to and repelled by someone who has "died" already and come back, or is this just me, and in any case is it wrong to say? She gave a great reading and could make money, I think, just by selling tapes of her little laugh. After the reading many went on to a lesbian dance bar, "Flame," in San Diego proper, but I was kind of beat and made Dodie take me back to the hotel bar where we sat listening to a piano man sing the old time melodies of the 50s and 60s and talked with Fanny Howe, Owen, and Mayer, over a whole slew of Cosmopolitans far into the wee hours of the morning, talking about everything that had happened at the conference, and many many other topics including our old late friend Bob Flanagan. Fanny announced she had a crush on Piero Heliczer after reading his poems in the new issue of "Shiny" magazine, and Owen and Mayer reminced about the real-life Heliczer and how she, Howe, was lucky not to have run into him in real life in late 60s NY because he was a menace and completely mad. Dodie had me give the pianist money to play her theme song, "My Funny Valentine" (her birthday is Valentine's Day) and Bernadette got me to ask him to play (but I forgot to ask for what reason) "Under the Boardwalk" and he did.

The next morning we spent packing and then squeezed into the little convertible of Standard Schaeffer with Lauren Gudath and Pam Lu, and all our luggage and then on to breakfast on the same block as the Faultline Theater, where Stephen Cope and Joe Ross were setting up for this massive poetry reading featuring many of the participants in the conference. Well, we've all been to this kind of

thing before, but this was an especially interesting reading and much more lively and fun that it had any right to be, for the program was a long one and the space isn't all that big and plenty of people came to hear and see and unwind, and people could only read for 5 to 7 minutes otherwise they would be put in jail (a prop for the current Faultline production, there was an actual jail cell on stage, with Lee Ann Brown sitting in it.) For one reason or another, Cope had figured out the order of the program should be in reverse alphabetical order, a delightful decision that always had one guessing who would read next. It must have been great for those, like Scalapino and Mary Margaret Sloan, who usually bring up the rear at these mass events, and I think we should try it in San Francisco. Thus the reading began with Bobbie West, a local San Diego writer whom I had never met and whose book "Scattered Damage" from Meow Books is terrific. Bobbie, if you're on this list, please e-mail me your address so I can send you the money for the book you signed for me. The next reader was Diane Ward, whom we had missed seeing at the conference but who proved available to come to this Sunday reading. It was great news to hear that Littoral Books is going to bring out a book by Ward and I told her, I would have walked to San Diego to hear her read for five minutes, she is the best. Or perhaps the best was Juliana Spahr, who read her wonderful poem "We," really I think (I'm thinking now) her masterpiece, this expansive, inclusive, hyper-realistic yet surreal poem about constituency, foreignness, and enduring love. This reading had a valedictory quality to it, as many readers had to get up and leave as soon as they had finished reading, for their shuttles were there to take them to the airport, so I didn't get a chance to say goodbye to many, you're there one moment and then you're gone, just like "life"! Anyhow I see I'm running out of time and I didn't even write down a list of all the readers, all of whom did very very well, so I will try to condense myself. Dodie and I were extremely pleased and proud of the good showings put on by the young San Francisco writers, including Giovanni Singleton, Kathy Lou Schultz, Renee Gladman, Pamela Lu and Taylor Brady; Bill Luoma brought down the house as usual; Lyn Hejinian read from "Happily"; a duo of Jen Hofer and Summi Kaipa brought off a performance piece based on Hejinian and Harryman's collaboration "The Wide Road" (which I wouldn't have thought could be done, but they did it); a young New York poet called Alastair (sp?) Julian (sp?) of whom I had not heard was very touching; and then it all seemed to wind up to a close with Dodie's reading from the "Letters of Mina Harker" and Rae Armantrout wound up last, powerful, triumphant, grinning and standing there, as wave after wave of applause washed over her in thanks for her part in organizing the conference.

With Joel Kuszai, Joe Ross, John Granger, Stephen Cope, Rick Burkhardt, Bill Mohr, Hung Q. Tu, etc., all living in San Diego and of course the more established figures Michael Davidson, Quincy Troupe, Jerome Rothenberg, David Antin, one

did get the feeling there's a lot of writing going on in San Diego but that it was largely a man's world, and so this female incursion into its dominion had the effect of a dream. Like many others, I'm very grateful to Howe and Armantrout for putting on the event, and to Kuszai, Granger, Ross and Cope for being so hospitable to us at every turn. Yes, there was X amount of friction, yes the debates about inclusivity, elitism, racism and revisionism hatched at the "Page Mothers" conference will color our world for a long time to come, and yes I had a terrific time and I hope they do it again.

Kevin Killian <--- page boy

PS, to all those who have written me back channel about the special "Page Mothers" issue of "Mirage #4/Period[ical]" (our 84th issue) we will be mailing them out to you in the week to come. We still have some copies left. This is the issue with one page of work each by Dodie Bellamy, Mary Burger, Cydney Chadwick, Norma Cole, Beverly Dahlen, Patricia Dienstfrey, Kathleen Fraser, Susan Gevirtz, Lauren Gudath, Lyn Hejinian, Brenda Hillman, Myung Mi Kim, Pamela Lu, Laura Moriarty, Yedda Morrison, Rena Rosenwasser, Jocelyn Saidenberg, Leslie Scalapino, Kathy Lou Schultz, Mary Margaret Sloan, and Elizabeth Treadwell.

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Stevens date

25 Mar 1999

One of his quick back-channel questions to the list — though only Kevin would arrive at Wallace Stevens by way of the actress Julie Newmar.

Hi everyone, this is Kevin Killian, I'm writing an article on the actress Julie Newmar and would like to know—real quick—what is the year Wallace Stevens wrote "Anecdote of the Jar"?

Please respond back channel to yours truly and thanks to everyone.

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Death of James Broughton

20 May 1999

James Broughton — poet, filmmaker, one of the elders of the San Francisco Renaissance and an original New American Poet — died at Port Townsend on May 17, 1999, at eighty-five. Kevin had come to know him during the Spicer research, and he marks the loss in the way he trusted most: by handing the man's own words back to the room.

Hi it's Kevin Killian. Poetics List has probably heard the news, but the poet and filmmaker James Broughton, one of the original "New American Poets," died in Port Townsend WA at age 85 on Monday May 17.

He could be a bit acerbic and he was kind of a nut about "joy" this and "joy" that but oh, I'll miss him. Dodie and I got him to dig out his long-ago "Maidens" play which I had heard about doing research into the Spicer book, and we printed it in our zine about 2 years ago, here it is again for those who didn't it

MISSION to GOMORRAH

This play was especially written to amuse poet friends and was performed by them for the first time in April 1958.

Rowena Monkenberg Helen Adam Mrs. Lily Trump Eve Triem Flippety Dick
Jess Major Beatrice Madeline Gleason Dr. Agon Robert Duncan

[Scene: a desert. Enter ROWENA MONKENBERG in a flowing gown, Mrs. LILY TRUMP in a cocktail dress, and FLIPPETY DICK in shorts.]

ROWENA. I see no city ahead.

Charred sand for endless miles.

No distant mountain. Not even a lizard.

How will we survive across this wasteland?

LILY. My feet hurt. I shouldn't have worn so much jewelry.

FLIP. When in doubt, wiggle less and breathe more!

ROWENA. This heat shrivels my Scottish bones.

The only water is this stinking green pond.

FLIP. Before using internally, or any other way,
see if your solution needs a good shake.

ROWENA. I hate you, Mr. Flippety Dick!

I can't forgive you for ruining the picnic.

Why did you kill that adorable tarantula?

FLIP. I will kill, and I will make to live.

I am the Dance of Shiva!

LILY. My friend Mrs. Pines, Mrs. Dora Pines,

saved string in boxes for forty-one years.

One morning she opened them all up
and hung herself.

ROWENA. O, the ugly passions of mankind, they poison me!

LILY. Dora Pines couldn't stand it,
the endless humdrumming next door,
not another minute.

FLIP. This is a poor excuse for a desert.

Where are the saints? Where are the slot machines?

LILY. Are we really on the right road to Gomorrah?

ROWENA. The last signpost said: Nirvana 25,000 miles.

LILY. I didn't want to come on this expedition.

But the Major is so determined.

Determined to establish her colony on sacred ground.

What are she and the doctor doing?

ROWENA (looking off).

The beasts! They're swatting!

They're swatting the tsetse flies!

FLIP. That sphinx we just passed in the sand-

I asked her a riddle.

LILY. Why do you talk to every girl you see?

You're just trying to break my heart.

Even my husband is more thoughtful of me than you are.

FLIP. Said I to the Sphinx, said I:

What is it that is born in a vacuum
lives in an air-conditioner
and dies in a doldrum?

LILY. I give up!

FLIP. Said the Sphinx to me, said the Sphinx:

'You gaseous lump,
how dare you ask me riddles!"
said the Sphinx to me.

LILY. The minx!

ROWENA (singing to herself).

So comely Maud has gone to her grave
for the sorry love of a sailor.

She hanged herself on the blackthorn bough
because her Johnny failed her.

Her cat of black, her golden finch
are friendless, left to grieve her.

And her Johnny Boy of the seven seas
is still a gay deceiver.

LILY. Flippety dear, I wish we were back in
that dark cocktail lounge, sitting on that soft divan
with plenty of that hard liquor.

FLIP. All the girls I dream of
have names beginning with Ann.
Anima, Anemia, Angina, Anesthesia . . .

LILY (sighing).

O Man, where is thy sting?

SLIP (suddenly passionate).

When honey dripped from the trees
in the once-golden orchard of Man,
happily sucked they like bees
those sunlit children of Pan.
Like lions of love lived they
where gold apples over-ran,
juicily roaring at play
in the bedfellow Eden of Man.

[Enter MAJOR BEATRICE, followed by DOCTOR AGON. She is wearing mountaineering outfit, he is in mourning.]

MAJOR B. No, doctor, no! I haven't time to kiss you!
We are on a pilgrimage.
I need your science by my side,
not your whiskers in my face.
We must persist, or we are undone.

DR. A. All errors are the want of love.
The Wheel never breaks, the break never heals.

MAJOR B. I have a mission. Don't you?
Doesn't everybody have a mission?
Don't you believe that sublime affirmations
shine in the dark heart of the world?

DR. A. Beyond this emptiness is there any bright oasis?
Are Truth, Beauty, and Goodness
ever found where we look for them?

LILY. Major, I'm thirsty. Where are we?

MAJOR B. We're not there yet.

ROWENA. There's a salty smell. Mightn't Gomorrah be near?

DR. A. Sand. A pond of stinking water. A tombstone.
Looks like the kingdom of Ozymandias.

FLIP. Is hell even hotter than this?

MAJOR B. 'Thus saith the Lord,
the people which were left of the sword
found grace in the desert.'

DR. A. It is also said that if a pig is thrown into deep water,
when he tries to save himself from drowning
he cuts his throat with his own sharp hooves.

ROWENA. O Doctor Agon, how could you?
That dear little pig! You're a beast!

MAJOR B. Take heart, my brave pilgrims.
The first condition is:
make yourself humble as dust and ashes.

DR. A. Major of my dreams,
If I were not entranced by the tip of your nose,
I would be back home in my Guatemalan hammock.

MAJOR B. This is no time for fiddle faddle.
Look at that warped cloud!

DR. A. Must I surrender my attachment to
the human creature and her 10,000 things?

LILY. When I was first married
my husband kept the cow in the bathtub.
He still keeps his tools in it.

DR. A. Maybe I could be of help, Mrs. Trump.
Here's my card.

MAJOR B. Doctor, you know what we are suffering from.
Why don't you help us?

LILY. There's a lot of it going around.

ROWENA. There's something wrong with the stars.

DR. A. There isn't any cure.

MAJOR B. There has to be!

FLIP (singsong).

Sippety syrupy sob,
the corn is off the cob.

Baba Yaga going gaga
cut off the balls of Bob.

[ROWENA shrieks.]

LILY. Falling, falling . . .

DR. A. The rain it raineth every day.

MAJOR B. Where falls the heavenly dew, to lave
the soiled black body in the grave?

LILY. Destruction!

ROWENA. Damnation!

FLIP. Disfigurement . . .

MAJOR B (beginning a blues song, which the others join).

It's gotten out of hand
It's coming down all around
It's falling out all over me,
I've got those radioactive, feeling inactive,
feverish fallout blues!

DR. A. My burning baby

MAJOR B. It's falling from above
but not from Heaven.
It's just coming down on me.

DR. A. . . . and me . . .

ALL. All over us! It's scandal-ous!

LILY. Ruin-ous!

ROWENA. Poison-ous!

FLIP. Igneous! . . .

MAJOR B. And I get the feeling I'm falling,
I'm falling out too . . .

DR. A. My fallen angel . . .

MAJOR B. I'm falling out with you.

DR. A. Then we're together . . .

DR. A. and MAJOR B (singing together).

I'm falling out-with-you.

MAJOR B. I'm falling out of love
 I'm falling out of shape
 I'm falling out of luck . . .

DR. A. I'm out of my mind . . .

LILY. Out of joint . . .

FLIP. Out of kilter . . .

ROWENA. Out of order . . .

DR. A. Out of the question . . .

MAJOR B. It's falling out-
 of all proportion
 and it's all coming down on me.

DR. A. . . . and me.

ALL. All over us! It's blasphem-ous!

LILY. Villain-ous!

ROWENA. Insidi-ous!

FLIP. Nucle-us!

MAJOR B. I've got those unattractive, overly active,
 damn hot fallout blues!

[End of song.]

FLIP (spoken).

 I'm sick.

ROWENA. The poor dragonflies! O the rats and fleas!

DR. A. Death is the thing we carry in our hands.

LILY. Death is the thing I see in my mirror.

FLIP. Death is all right for the other fellow.

ROWENA. Death is the loiterer I do not trust.

MAJOR B. Where falls the heavenly dew, to lave
 the soiled black body in the grave?

DR. A. Death is a womb, like sleep and dream.

MAJOR B. The seed, the seed, the renewing grace . . .

DR. A. Out of Death's blackened phallus
 bursts a beauty of sunrise flower.

MAJOR B. Death is the beginning we fear to know.

FLIP. What's so great about staying alive?

ROWENA (singing).

The mountains are all looking down, down, down,
the fair lady Margaret to see,
how her devilish act did startle the town
when she hanged her two babes on a tree, tall tree . . .

LILY. My feet hurt. They're so hot.

MAJOR B. Take heart again, my pilgrims.
You have been humbled enough by dust and ashes.
Now arise. Rise to the uplift stair!
We have longer to go in the shortest of time
and there's no way out but up!

DR. A. How far will the Eternal Feminine
lead us eternally upward?

LILY. Will we get to a nice cocktail lounge?

FLIP. Will I have to put up with angels?

ROWENA. I want to see Gomorrah!
I want to see the bones of burning sinners!

MAJOR B. All that fails we witness and denounce.
So let us risk the only bliss that counts.
Come, take adventure! Let the sorrow go!
This wasteful desert is a passing show.

[She herds them off.]

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Through the summer the list argued on without much of him; he surfaced again in August, drawn back by a fight about Boston and a death in Los Angeles.

Re: Boston 99

04 Aug 1999

The list had been arguing over the Boston poetry conference and its discontents, and Jacques Debrot had posted a thicket of questions about a supposed missing generation. Kevin answers from three thousand miles west, in the amused voice of an outsider who suspects the malaise is everywhere.

Dear Jacques Debrot, congratulations on posing so many complicated questions all in one post and for provoking all of us into thinking about so many different issues. I can't respond very fully to any of your points but can speak only briefly

now. Daniel Bouchard has wisely printed a list of Boston poets attending said Conference and a second list of poets from elsewhere that also attended, made it concrete and plain, and frankly speaking as an outsider I wonder how the New York poets in attendance come off as so much more sophisticated and/or accomplished and/or experimental than the Boston ones. Please clarify.

In the matter of a "missing generation" doesn't Boston have a very good parallel in the case of Vancouver where, just as you claim happened in Boston, most of the older poets "with clout" were working in "adherence to mimetic and linear discourses," "clearly within the context of Modernist poetics." And then despite the missingness, the absence of the important generation, Vancouver yet transformed itself into a veritable capital of Language writing. Perhaps in searching for reasons for the "ambivalencies" of Boston poetry you are looking too hard for something that's NOT not there.

I'm also not sure what role Lori Lubeski is playing in your argument, is she an example of an important (perhaps older?) (or younger?) experimental voice ignored or squelched or "disappeared" by organizers of Conference?

I know it's difficult in a public space to bring up these issues, particularly of malaise. So, good for you. But isn't poetry everywhere, at every time, in malaise and must continually be recuperated and rescued? Are you a Bostonian yourself? You should come to San Francisco where, despite the presence among us of even the missing generation, six or seven or eight generations are all working at once and still feeling a little hung over and millennial right now.

Kevin Killian San Francisco, CA

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Re: Charles Macaulay

24 Aug 1999

Charles Macaulay was a working television actor before he was, to Kevin, the widower of the Los Angeles poet Leland Hickman — whose poems Kevin was then trying to clear for reprinting. Word of his dying reached the list, and Kevin answered it plainly.

| *Charles Macaulay was the partner of the late LA poet and editor Leland*

When I first met Charles Macaulay he and Leland Hickman invited me to dinner when they lived in North Hollywood, and I went with Matias Viegner, and it was very late and dark and Charles answered the doorbell, and he looked so familiar I gave out an inadvertent, no not scream, but a low moan. Matias had the presence of mind to ask Charles for his autograph, having recognized him from TV. (Charles played on several episodes of Star Trek, he was Jaris in "Wolf in the Fold" and Landru in the "Return of the Archons" episode.) He wasn't a star, but because one had seen him so often on TV in sitcoms, soaps, whatever, one felt one

knew him so intimately and so well—very different from meeting any other kind of stranger.

Of course he and Lee had the glamor of their close association with Raymond Burr, one of Hollywood's more mysterious figures, ever since I was a little boy watching Raymond Burr putting his wife in that trunk in "Rear Window" or prosecuting poor Montgomery Clift in "A Place in the Sun" before that.

Just last week I was trying to track him down to obtain permission for Timothy Liu to reprint some of Lee Hickman's poems for the new postwar gay male anthology planned by Talisman House Press. And then Lynda Claussen got on the case too (the Archive for New Poetry at UCSD controls the copyrights, thank God, for Hickman's work) and she sadly reported that Charles was in the hospital and wasn't going to come out of it.

As Ron Silliman says, people do forget, it's only natural I suppose. We've got so much on our brains all the time just trying to make it from day to day. "Born of the sun they travelled a short while towards the sun,/ And left the vivid air signed with their honour."

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"Mirage #4/Period[ical]" #89, Atlanta issue

01 Dec 1999

Mirage #4/Period[ical], the xerox zine he and Dodie kept up for years, handed each issue to a different scene to fill; number 89 went to Atlanta.

Hi, it's Kevin Killian. Dodie Bellamy and I have turned over the new issue of our zine "Mirage #4/Period[ical]" to the Atlanta Writers Group about whom we had been quite curious and now the issue (#89!!) is ready. Maybe it will open eyes all over the world about the interesting new writing scene in Atlanta. Anyhow, if anyone on this list would like a copy please back-channel me and I'll send you one. Please don't send money, this is a free offer and just send your address instead (unless you think I know it by heart). No solicitors will call...

Kevin K.

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2000

End of Century Reading Material

02 Jan 2000

A January reckoning of what he had been reading over the holidays and his birthday — the Killian book report, in which a former Spice Girl's memoir and a life of Mary Butts are weighed on the very same scale.

Laura Riding, "Progress of Stories" Geri Halliwell, "If Only" this memoir by the former Spice Girl is much better than I thought it would be James Schuyler, "Selected Art Writing," ed Simon Pettet, I got this for my birthday and so far it's very disappointing, a crack in the idol for me, I hadn't realized how awful a book could be when the writer has nothing to say & yet curiously fascinating because it just goes on and on and on Russell Ferguson, "In Memory of my Feelings: Frank O'Hara and American Art" this is the catalogue from the LA MOCA show which I missed, another birthday present, beautifully done and Ferguson's essay not bad for a kind of primer into O'Hara, tho' very basic of course, I got the feeling he wrote it for people who don't know much or care much for poetry "Mary Butts Scenes from a Life," this long, long biography of Butts seems to be taken most directly from Butts' unpublished diary so we hear every little thing about her that the diary knows . . . Unquestionably strengthens my take on Butts' novels and poetry (at the same time you think, what an awful mother and b, if you or I smoked 20 pipes of opium a day we'd be awful parents too) Result, for my birthday I wanted maybe 4 or 5 pipes of opium, alas, did not get "Teller of Tales the Life of Arthur Conan Doyle" finally a biography that does make sense of Conan Doyle's interest in spiritualism and the paranormal, I enjoyed this one a lot "Period," Dennis Cooper's fifth novel, this one comes out in the stores in March but Dodie is reviewing it and I'm reading it over her shoulder, very challenging and difficult

"Dusty in London," the so called "lost" recordings of Dusty Springfield now available on CD from Rhino records, what can I say, she is so strong and affecting, yes, another birthday present

On another note, we sent out 135 copies of the "Atlanta" issue of our zine, "Mirage #4/Period[ical]," after the flood of e-mail requesting them, to the various characters on this list, and to date eight of you have written back saying you've received it. This reminds me of the way Lear mistakenly felt Cordelia ungrateful, and how, before, I always faulted Shakespeare for making him, Lear, so quick to jump to sorry conclusions. In any case, you wonderful eight people have warmed my heart turning it into a beacon of light and hope for the year 2000. You know who you are!

— Kevin Killian

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Re: gender count (or whatever it was, can't remember)

14 Feb 2000

Brian Stefans, mid-thread on how one might possibly discuss gender, had let slip a piece of casting Kevin was saving as a surprise.

At 1:14 AM -0500 1/1/90, Brian Stefans wrote:

I don't quite know how to discuss gender in a productive manner myself, ditto for race — I prefer social experiments rather than discourse in that instance. (I'm playing Yoko Ono in an upcoming Kevin Killian play in New York, for example — that'll be a trip, got to get my greatest hits CD out!)

This was supposed to be a surprise, Brian!

As part of Kevin's reading this Wednesday (Feb. 16) at the Threadwaxing Space, Brian, Eileen Myles, and others will help Kevin act out a scene from his play "The Vegetable Kingdom," a spoof of vegetarianism and diva rivalry.

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Dario Argento in San Jose

13 Mar 2000

Kevin's cinephilia ran happily to the lurid, and few figures thrilled him like the Italian horror director Dario Argento, who turned up in the flesh at the San Jose Film Festival.

I found God a week ago Thursday, but then it slipped my mind, now I've got it straight again but have forgotten some of the details. But here in San Francisco some of us who love the films of the Italian horror director Dario Argento were terribly excited when we found out that he was to be the guest of honor at the 10th San Jose Film Festival, and was slated to appear, in person, to introduce four of his films on four consecutive days. On March 2nd Pam Lu and I drove down to San Jose, about an hour from downtown San Francisco, and we stopped off at a cute bungalow nearby the theater. There in this cute bungalow live the poets David Larsen and Beth Murray, the only people I know in San Jose (and the editors of the "San Jose Manual of Style" which is a really cool theory journal). They made a lavish Italian dinner and we practiced speaking Italian and then we went to the show (Beth stayed home out of a fore-dained pre-knowledge that she wouldn't like "Suspiria"). The theater was not too crowded and we slipped into our seats quietly, reverential hush. Then I spotted Dario Argento standing in the back of the darkened auditorium, particles of popcorn scented lobby light illuminating the curve of his shoulders and his weird, untamed and greasy hair, now gray, but purple in the light. I squealed because I had seen a god, nudging my companions. "It's him," I breathed. Some San Jose functionary came on and gave a short civic boosting speech and then brought on "Dario" (as the fans call him, familiarly) and we screamed with pleasure. He is a goofy clownish guy in person, just as odd as the publicity pictures for the past 30 years have suggested,

but very sweet and Roberto Benigni, or else this is a strategy to get his savage message past the hearts of the adoring multitudes who love this kind of language play and "how do you say" kind of bumblingitis. I think this the case. If you haven't seen these pictures, imagine an extremely tall, cadaverously spooky looking man with a head the exact shape of a skull, eye burning out of deep-set sockets, —looks like he's been dead for several days. He is horribly creepy, like a gravedigger or zombie, and looks totally cruel and debauched, like the picture of Dorian Gray in the attic. But as I say, in life he is considerably shorter, plumper and sweeter.

Dario gave a short little "thank you" talk and then the lights went down and they showed "Suspiria" in a widescreen print I had never seen before. Pam and I noticed several details right away that you couldn't see in the regular pan and scan TV print we had watched often before, for example, when Jessica Harper first gets off the plane and walks through the airplane terminal right there on her right, striding towards the camera, is none other than Daria Nicolodi, dressed in a fetching 70s style—we cheered, having a perverse love for Daria (who is the former wife of Dario and the lead in several of his mid-career pictures) (not the world's greatest actress, and remarkably plain for a movie star, but an indelible presence of Italian cinema) (and also the co-writer of "Suspiria"). What else, we asked ourselves, had we missed? — and the answer turned out to be plenty!!

I won't bore you all with our group analysis of the film. Either you like it or you hate it but try if you can to imagine our thrill when after the movie ended a compact Monty Woolley type brought Dario back on stage to ask him questions, and then opened up the questions to the audience. I will share the revelations back channel if pressed, but let me think of the top 2 or 3 things he said. "Suspiria," which takes place largely in a scary ballet academy for teens and young people, was originally written to feature children—really young children, say, ten or so, but the producers thought it would be bad taste to have so many children murdered. But his vision triumphed in that he asked all the actors to act as if they were children (which explains why so many of the performances, which we had thought were just sort of "European" and unfocussed, are so brilliant. Also that's why the doorknobs are up so high on all the doors, to further this effect. Check it out! When asked why the animals in his films— such as the maggots and the seeing eye dog in "Suspiria"—are so much better at acting than his actors, he retorted by claiming that everyone's talking about the "final masterpiece of Kubrick" but that Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman are nothing more than big Muppets. Animals, he said, are better actors by nature (a Bressonian credo too). At this juncture David sneaked down to the front of the stage and snapped a picture of him with my camera.

When the Q & A thing was over, he stayed to sign autographs and have his picture taken with whoever wanted it. We each stood on a little line, no longer than your average line for taking Holy Communion in a Catholic Church, and shook his hand, got our photos signed, clapped him on the back and tried to thank him for coming 18 hours on Alitalia all the way from the "Profondo Rosso" studio in Rome all the way to San Jose. Apparently he thought it **was** San Francisco, but I set him straight.

So that's why I've been out of touch . . .

Kevin Killian

PS Other good films with Daria Nicolodi include "Deep Red," "Tenebrae," "Phenomena" and "Opera"—you must see her, she's like nothing else in the world and just about indescribable as an icon.

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Spring went quiet on his end; when he came back in June it was with a new play, and close behind it the week in Maine that would swallow his summer whole.

"The Shakers" in San Francisco

12 Jun 2000

Another of the Poets Theater productions, written with Wayne Smith and staged this time as a benefit for Poets in Need, the newly formed fund for artists in trouble.

Hi everyone, it's Kevin Killian. On Thursday, this week, we're putting on another piece of Poets Theater to which all are invited.

Small Press Traffic and San Francisco Art Institute present

Thursday, June 15, 2000 THE SHAKERS a new play by Kevin Killian and Wayne Smith

San Francisco Art Institute Auditorium 800 Chestnut Street (North Beach), San Francisco 7:30 p.m. \$5 admission

Shortly after the US Civil War, during the American Renaissance, a small band of spiritual pioneers live simply on a rural commune, rejecting the temptations of the outside world. United in their devotion to Mother Ann Lee (but separated by gender), they invent ingenious chairs still used today: rocking, high, electric and wheel, among others. In religious ecstasy. they often whirl, tremble and shake on the floor, hence the name "Shakers." But wrinkles are beginning to appear in their nineteenth century utopia of clean lines. A rebellious Shaker girl with amnesia begins naming the stars in the sky and dares to dream of a life outside her village; an aged patriarch hides a shameful secret; an old woman tells fortunes by listening to apples ripen; a wounded and bitter Civil War veteran

watches as his world divides in two; and a vagabond poet/male nurse makes chocolates for everyone. Near the end, a new broom is invented.

With a cast of San Francisco poets and painters including Rupert Adley, Elliott Anderson, Taylor Brady, Norma Cole, Phoebe Gloeckner, Craig Goodman, Glen Helfand, Clifford Hengst, Marisa Hernandez, Scott Hewicker, Tanya Hollis, Kevin Killian, Yedda Morrison, Rex Ray, Jocelyn Saidenberg, Cedar Sigo and Wayne Smith.

This is a benefit for POETS IN NEED, the brand new non-profit organization based in Pacifica founded among others by Michael Rothenberg, Lyn Hejinian and Leslie Scalapino to alleviate the immediate health and/or economic emergencies of poets and other artists. So bring your checkbook if possible and learn more about this worthy new group. All contributions are tax-deductible.

SISTER RAY. You've only been here in Hancock Village one year. When we found you on the side of the road, and you came to, in the dairy, you already knew how to read, but you couldn't churn.

POLLY. What are you implying?

SISTER RAY. Well, look at this article I saw in the News. It's a story about a young girl from Amherst, Emily Dickinson, who disappeared from her family's home one year ago today. And there's a picture in it that looks a bit like you.

POLLY. She doesn't look like me at all! That girl Emily has cross-hatching. She's aloof, stuck-up, full of herself. I'm a more natural, communal kind of person.

SISTER RAY. I hate to think of some poor Amherst family missing their daughter. Their beautiful, beautiful young daughter . . . Emily . . . wondering where she is . . . night after night. Such a separation must be unbearable for them. No, Polly. It most certainly couldn't be you.

POLLY. Of course she's not, Sister Ray. I know who I am and I'm not her.

SISTER RAY. Right! Forget I said anything.

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What I saw at the Orono Conference 2000, Part I

05 Jul 2000

Every few years the University of Maine at Orono convened a conference on a single decade of American poetry; the 2000 gathering took the 1960s. Kevin went, and filed the longest and most gleeful of all his conference serials — the first of four parts.

Charles, you asked people on the Poetics List to report on the recent Orono Conference. I was there and I made a few notes. As usual, so many impressions

jumbling in that I can't think about them clearly, like trying to pass out drunk but the room keeps spinning in my head. But I'll do my best. Overall I had a marvelous time and can't think of a single flaw in the arrangements or execution of this event, though I can imagine others carping (in fact, I heard some of them). Malcontents, though we always need malcontents don't we.

Dodie Bellamy and I got off a plane in Portland on Wednesday, June 28, 2000, and drove a few hours North to the campus in Orono, a bucolic part of Maine so familiar from all those Stephen King novels and right past Lawndale Cemetery—the original of "Pet Sematery" & just as spooky in real life. Then we got to the registration building to "check in," you should have seen our faces when we found out we were sharing a room with Keith Tuma, Alan Golding and George Bowering! Talk about frightening! But all turned out just fine because they really meant a "suite," a form of dorm living they didn't have when I was a college boy. All was civilized and up and up. Before I knew more, it was time to repair to the greeting ceremony in the "Ornamental Gardens" of Orono where all kinds of eats were laid out on trays—hamburgers, chicken, cole slaw, potato salad, garden burgers, and the reddest hot dogs I've ever seen, that I found out were called "Maine red hot dogs" (a regional treat), though only lemonade and iced tea to drink which quashed the cocktail party atmosphere, or sedated it I guess, still the lovely pink roses of Maine, that seem to breathe salt like fish, made this very festive, etc., while we sat while various University dignitaries welcomed us. I decided then and there to compile a Fashion Report on the best and worst outfits people were wearing (so shall share with you some of my knowledge) as well as decide which panels, plenary talks, readings, etc., were good and which were ho-hum. To tell the truth, I was panicking a little because, in this garden display, I recognized only a few familiar faces and was thinking, my God, all these strangers, and probably all of them on the Poetics List with only a limited opinion of me. Shallow? Perhaps, but this was a crowd growing unruly with no cocktails and a hard look to them, like a bunch of Jack Elams thirsty for gin and blood in *Once Upon a Time in the West*. Then the line parted and Amiri Baraka, whom I had never met, showed his face, and the unruly mood of the crowd changed to something reverent and sheepish. He is very little, like all stars when you see them in person, little and with a big head, again, like the stars. For some reason, watching him on TV and seeing all those photos I thought he'd be a big Michael Clarke Duncan sort of fellow, but just the reverse. Anyhow, this auspicious (if tiny) beginning in this elegant country garden was only the prologue to the Conference's big drama events, as you'll see.

The conference proper then moved to a long, low, tiered building called "Corbett" in which I was to spend, in the week ahead, many of my most sleepy hours ever.

Don't know why, it was merely the oxygen, filtered through charcoal, would put me in a stupor every twenty minutes from which only the brilliance of what stabbed through me from on-stage woke me up like smelling salts-sometimes. The first two papers were delivered to all, Marjorie Perloff spoke with customary verve and speed through an incredibly difficult series of calculations, subtractions and speculations regarding the figures of the "Watchman" and "Spy" in the eponymous Jasper Johns painting, linking Johns' practice to that of O'Hara and Cage and causing kind of a stir by hinting that, after all is said and done, O'Hara was really a 50s kind of artist and has to make way, in retrospect, to Johns and Cage (fundamental 60s artists) in history's long cool view. The second plenary followed immediately afterwards, by Michael Davidson, who gave a talk called "Missing Larry" (Eigner) that evolved into a compassionate plea for a new "poetics of the disabled" which might someday encompass a greater understanding of how disabled people, like Eigner, who was born with cerebral palsy, work within and without the field—a paper which I found very moving but afterwards I was wondering how this poetics was really going to work and how the poetry of disabled people is different (or is it supposed to be?) from that of everyone else. So, one wanted to see this paper written down instead of trying to remember all of it with a memory as faulty as mine. But, together, this one two Perloff-Davidson punch gave a taste of the range of topics touched on at the conference—very rangy indeed, except a distinct lack of plenary sessions about women writers of the 60s—I think that Lynn Keller's paper on the early work of Rosmarie Waldrop, Kathleen Fraser, and Fanny Howe was the honorary exception—and Albert Gelpi gave one on the correspondence between Denise Levertov & Robert Duncan—not the fault of any particular speaker, but maybe indicative of the anti-feminism of the period? Also, Waldrop, Fraser and Howe are not my idea of sixties poets anyhow, but that leads me into another conundrum of Orono, the slippage—

Slippage of 60s and 70s, so that we had readings from many poets who didn't seem to be of the sixties at all, but perhaps put forth some early poems in high school or university, testing the waters so to speak, so it was all very odd and maybe a reason why the organizers seem to be tiring of the "decade" custom they have followed over the past several years? That's mere speculation on my part.

Actually all through the first plenary session Dodie and I could hardly tear our eyes away from Douglas Rothschild who showed up in a guise new to us, he, the former pesky mosquito to NY Language Poetry's tetchy donkey, and now magnificently arrayed and coiffed in a retro seventies disco/leisure/high fashion series of suits and boots, slimmed down, curled up, and looking very John Leguizamo and relaxed.

Aldon Nielsen gave a short, impassioned introduction to his former professor Amiri Baraka, and then the man himself took the stage, hurling through his poems, humming little music snatches, brilliantly blending monologic, lyric and "spoken word" styles with nary a pause, shouting it out, dropping to a whisper like James Brown, the crowd went nuts and once we saw Maria Damon clapping with her hands above her head we joined in resulting in standing oration for Baraka, the first of the conference. Finally, we had encountered an actual 60s poet, revolutionary fervor undimmed by time and dates and anything else.

The events continued, though after so much thought I missed one session and so failed to hear "Poet of the 60s" Gene Frumkin so I still have no idea which one he was or is nor what he did either then or now. Instead we repaired for an open area of a building nearby our dorm where a bar was set up and ordered drinks hastily and ashamedly. I remember still thinking, gee, none of these people look familiar. There was to be, as every night, an open reading with conference attendees who could sign up as belatedly as five minutes before, and we encountered our fellow Californian K. Silem Mohammad, anxious perhaps about his reading to come, and wishing out loud that he would be able to meet two particular poets, Jacques Debrot and Michael Magee, whom he had never met except only through the portals of the internet. I looked behind me and there were Debrot and Magee, wondering aloud the exact same thing, so was able to introduce them to "Kasey" and end the suspense. Apparently they all three got on thick as thieves because for the next week you had only to look at the one to find the other two. The room started to crowd up and soon there was a long line of people snaking through the space looking for a drink. There was Asa Watten, the 13 year old son of Barrett Watten and Carla Harryman, plaintively wandering through the assemblage looking for someone to play chess with. He carried a whole chess set in his knapsack. This wasn't even remotely interesting to me, though I've been a fan of Asa's for many, many years. After an hour or so the open reading began. I can't remember everyone who read but I heard some interesting readings from a variety of poets from all over the world (very few Californians). About 1.30 a.m., feeling tired, I returned to my "suite," but I hadn't reckoned on my canny suite-mates who had slipped out, bought their own liquor, and were having a party of their own in our charming common room (just like Brideshead Revisited!) — I snapped a photo of the party then went to bed, however after about 20 minutes located another room a few doors down, with a big fireplace and a TV, and booted the rascals out into this room so I could try to sleep, and that was only Wednesday.

— Kevin Killian

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What I saw at the Orono Conference 2000, part II

06 Jul 2000

The second installment, carrying into Thursday. Among the elders on hand was the poet John Wieners, whom Kevin had not laid eyes on in a decade.

What I saw at the Orono Conference on Thursday, June 29, 2000

I woke up startlingly early. Breakfast, 7:00 a.m., seemed so early but then I figured, oh, if I was in my regular life I certainly would be up by 6.30, so managed to fool myself for quite a while. I crept out of my room to have a cigarette and was confronted in the hallway by an amazing number of beer bottles, empty half-pints, soda cartons and crushed plastic cups brimming with old Kool butts. The Capricorn in me rebelled and I pulled a big trash liner to one side and began cleaning up, my thoughts roiling, nervous for some reason. In ordinary life I work for a large janitorial company and in my head I could imagine the scorn and contempt with which the Orono janitors would be thinking about the poets and scholars they were cleaning up after. This was so Felix Unger of me I could hardly believe it myself, but all of a sudden a finger's tapping my shoulder and a courtly voice speaks through the gray dawn, "May I be of some assistance, young man?" Curtly I grunted, turned around and came face to face with John Wieners, whom I hadn't seen in ten years or so. "I slept like a top!" he cried out, "Then I came to my senses and wanted a smoke." He looked great. Okay, not great, but if you'd been through what he's been through you'd probably look worse.

We sifted through the glass debris like a pair of rag pickers from a painting by Jean-Francois Millet. Chancing upon a disgusting bottle of Labatt Blue, Wieners paused. "This beer is Canadian-Fred Wah must be here," he deduced, growing agitated like Sherlock Holmes at the Reichenbach Falls. "I must see Fred Wah and his two children and Pauline!" He speaks a bit more slowly, haltingly, than most Bostonians I've known, but with exacerbated finality and righteousness. But also a kind of sweet demureness I've never known elsewhere.

"I have a present for you," I said, hauling it out of my pocket. Have any of you seen the new book "The Blind See Only the Blind" (Pressed Wafer/Granary Books) in which 30 or 40 poets pay tribute to John Wieners? The volume climaxes with a new poem by Wieners himself, in which he waxes lyrical about forgotten stars of his youth, including the one and only Edie Adams, a blond comedienne/soubrette who long ago starred in the Broadway musicals "Wonderful Town" (1953) and "Li'l Abner" (1957). The day the "Blind" book came in the mail, Dodie and I had a chance to meet Edie Adams and we took the book to her gingerly enough and asked her to sign it "to our friend the great poet." She claimed to have known, in her Hollywood heyday, both Allen Ginsberg and Carl Sandberg ("all the burgs," she boasted) so poetry was no big thing for her. "Was John Wieners ever in San

Francisco?" she cried, a tiny wrinkle crossing her forehead. "Then I met him in 1959 with Ernie!" (Ernie Kovacs, her late husband.) As this was just possible, I nodded bumptiously, showed her where to sign. I produced the book now for Wieners. "Look what she wrote, "FOR JOHN WIENERS, HOW EXCITING FOR ME, I LOVE YOUR WORK, LOVE, EDIE ADAMS, SAN FRANCISCO 2000."

John held the book from different angles, peering at it above and below his face-a-main, as though it would bite him. "I thought she must be deceased!" "No, and Dodie took pictures of her signing it." "Please let me examine the shots," he begged. I showed him two which I'd tucked into the book-one shot of Adams grinning into the camera, her white powdered face bigger than the Cheshire Cat's. The other showed her querulous profile as she sat lost in thought, trying to remember the good old Hotel Wentley days I assume. "I'd like one of these, Kevin, for my own," John said. "But only one. And I can't decide which shows the sheer insouciance of Miss Adams to best advantage. May I decide later?"

"We are all so excited you are here among us," I said. It's hard to talk to someone with Wieners' personality without lapsing into his particularly affected lingo-at least it's hard for a Capricorn. "Take all the time you need!" So saying I slung my garbage bag over my shoulder like Ralph Kramden and went to breakfast and a day of panels.

The regular panel sessions: always or so it seemed, so many good ones all at the same time so that one was forced to make these agonizing decisions and usually they each turned out wrong. For example, the first choice was among a panel called "Echoes of the 1930s," then one on John Ashbery, a separate panel on NY School poets, a Baraka And Others panel, and one called "A sense of place." I don't know, I just figured, A sense of place sounds dull, though maybe I'm wrong. So that was out. "Echoes of the 1930s?" That was a good possibility because the abstracts of the papers sounded so intriguing and sometimes one feels, oh why go to a panel on someone like Ashbery, why not go and find out something about someone more obscure, how else will I ever learn anything? So this "Echoes" panel had papers on Ramon Guthrie, Carl Rakosi, and Thomas McGrath, poets who were still active in the 1960s tho productive as early as the 1930s, and I know a little bit about Rakosi and McGrath but nothing about Ramon Guthrie & I still don't. I wound up taking the better part of valor, by attending a panel I knew would have at least one good paper, because I had heard Lytle Shaw give a paper before and knew he'd deliver value for money, so to speak. This panel, chaired by the dapper, French-cut, exhausted Steven Evans, was on "In and Around New York," and Lytle's paper outlined the possible connections in life and in poetry between Frank O'Hara and Ezra Pound, a subject on which I had never thought it possible to write even a sentence let alone 20 minutes worth of paper. Turns out

that O'Hara had written a poem on "The Pisan Cantos" and later, in a different frame of mind, a mind turned 100% towards Personalism, made Pound one of his subjects in "Biotherm"! From these two angles Lytle developed a theory that clarified the different attitudes towards audience that O'Hara and Pound each worked from. Funny that Pound wound up outliving O'Hara, who must have thought Pound such an old man when he began to write. At Orono these kinds of thoughts came to one often. I looked at the classroom we were sitting in, and remembered back to 4 years ago. This was the very classroom in which the top of my head came off after a particularly brilliant brace of O'Hara papers given by Steve (Evans) himself and by Ben Friedlander during the 50s conference. And now, as though it had been some sort of audition, both Evans and Friedlander have been hired by U Maine Orono! This must, I decided, spell good luck for Lytle Shaw!

After the first panel, all spilled out into the lobby of "Corbett" Hall and drank coffee and talked about which panels and papers had been the best. All papers, or so it seemed, given by anyone named "Jonathan" had been noteworthy. (I didn't hear any Jonathans, alas, during my entire stay.) Dee Morris introduced me to Richard Quinn who, or so everyone said, had just given a great paper on Albert Ayler, John Coltrane and Amiri Baraka on the "Baraka and Others" panel. I wondered how the "Sense of Place" people had done, and then the program book told me there were two upcoming readings at 10 and at 11 by Ted Enslin, Nathaniel Tarn and Toby Olson, people one would never ordinarily get to hear in San Francisco, and this made me reflect that "Sense of Place" studies were never stronger than in Maine.

In the afternoon, after lunch, I didn't have as much choice about what to see, because I had committed to chairing a panel, and so had Dodie. We both missed the "Baraka and Others II" panel, the panel on Brooks, Rukeyser and Rexroth, and the panel on Dickey, Eckman and Snyder. Again a few Jonathans took the field. The first Louis Zukofsky panel was in this slot too, and apparently this was one of the very best of the week. Dodie told me hers went very well, with Linda Russo taking off on Barrett Watten's Hettie Jones take, and Matthew Pifer giving a research-based paper on Detroit's twin streams of counterculture and revolutionary mimeo work in the 1960s (like John Sinclair). Alas, our dear Nick Lawrence did not appear due to illness, a virulent South African fever felling him, ironic since his paper was to have been called "Mimeo Fever." (He eventually did arrive at the conference, a bit frail, and some were heard to make ebola jokes.) The panel I chaired was great, even if I say so myself, for I had leapt at a chance to be the chair for a panel featuring 3 of my favorite poets, Tony Lopez, Marjorie Welish, and Kasey Mohammad on "The New York School." Welish speaks so

precisely and learnedly and wittily in every sentence—some unexpected verb or adjective pins down her thought like Nabokov his butterflies. Kasey whom I now regard as one of our California homeboys did us proud by giving a very very close reading to a particular Ashbery poem I can't remember which one now (but it's the one that ends a stanza with the word "The"), and Tony Lopez brilliantly read Ted Berrigan's sequence "In the Early Morning Rain" as a way of explaining how the Sonnets were constructed, managing to inject some controversy by soundly rebutting some other recent article about Berrigan by Libbie Rifkin, an admirable scholar indeed. Afterwards Tony said ruefully, "Maybe I shouldn't have come down so hard on Rifkin, for they do say she's gorgeous."

I was startled then to see Keith and Rosmarie Waldrop walking through the hallway, for their lack of interest at conferences has long been a truism of poetry, like the reclusivity of Jess or the hair of Jorie Graham. But there they were, she, with the piquant looks of a younger Luise Rainer, and the voice of Glinda the Good Witch, and he, with that freaky Charles Manson hair and beard that might scare a child, except he has the open, sweet, appealing face of one of the Teletubbies. "Why are you here?" I called to them in disbelief. Turned out they had shown up out of personal loyalty to Steve Evans and to Jennifer Moxley.

The plenary sessions that evening were just as intriguing. One was by Frank Davey on "Regressive Poetics of the 1960s." Briefly he described the ways in which Canadian poetry was turned on its head in the 1960s in ways which had not entirely positive effects for its state today. Davey was part of a large Canadian contingent we were very happy to greet, as the conference this year had changed its emphasis slightly to include the formerly rebuffed or excluded Canadians, I wonder why? Anyway Frank Davey wins our Fashion Award hands down with his beautiful Haspel suit, in a lightweight cotton so highly pressed it seemed metallic, bought (or so we later learned) on the eve of a trip to India in April 1982. Barrett Watten followed Davey with a slide and video presentation about the Berkeley Free Speech riots of the mid-60s and their aftermath. This was a talk with a lot of carefully wrought argument that was wonderful to look at and listen to, but in the end it all wound up being extraordinarily personal, as though the breakdown of the revolution had resulted in one salutary effect, Watten's own graduation from UC Berkeley in 1968 and the birth of the Language Poetry movement (foretold when, asked for his opinions about some Berkeley protest march at which he was present, Allen Ginsberg thought for a minute and then began emitting a Sanskrit mantra, resulting in a perplexity and turning inside out of language that Watten, et al, were to take to even greater heights). This is the event that Matt Richardson has reported on to us on the List, in which "Baraka attended this reading and finally lashed out at Watten for being a "hyper-rational pseudo-

radical" and for "pimping" radical politics for his own academic benefit." Coming in late, but carrying a whole sheaf of notes, Baraka called out from the audience to Davey and Watten, "I don't know your names, so I'll call you First Person and Second Person." He accused them of character assassination and of trashing the 60s so that their academic careers would prosper. The debate grew so heated that a conference organizer (Ben Friedlander) took the unprecedented step of scheduling an ad hoc panel in the middle of the cafeteria on another day to stage a formal debate between Watten and Baraka. But more of this later.

The adrenalin high, the bar opened its doors, and happily there were Liz Willis and Kristin Prevallet who, shopping at the local IGA in Orono, came upon a display of Tab, the 1960s Coca-Cola-made soft drink to which I became addicted quite early, and which was withdrawn from sale in California about 3 years ago. And Liz and Kristin brought me a case of it, the best gift I ever had, and so I spent the remaining days of the conference quite drunk on Tab which, I understand, took its name from a NASA prototype and stands acronymically for "Totally Artificial Beverage" the way "TANG" used to mean "Totally Artificial Nutrient Group," thus completing the 60s motif (for me) through a regressive synaesthesia. And then the open reading started up and I read and Dodie read and we felt well-attended and safe, far from home, and that was Thursday, pretty much.

More later.

Kevin Killian

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What I Saw at the Orono Conference 2000, part III

09 Jul 2000

The third installment. The conference's real drama — the quarrel between Amiri Baraka and Barrett Watten — was gathering, and Kevin, as always, had contrived a seat near the front.

Again I had Hobson's Choice on Friday morning, June 30th, but certainly I felt fresher than most-bodies were littered all around as though after a tornado after the all-night party that had engulfed our dorm. Should I attend the panel on b.p.nichol, George Bowering, Fred Wah? The three Canadians giving the papers on these men were new found friends-sunny and smart and (okay, in the case of Scott Pound, dark, glowering, shaved-head-bald and sexy) and ordinarily I would have listened eagerly to anything they had to say. But what about the George Oppen panel that featured two fine and wizard pals Stephen Cope and Alan Golding, plus another fellow I didn't already know?

And plus, a pesky angel on my shoulder kept whispering to me, I had promised Barbara Guest I'd go to "her" panel and scurry back home and fill her in. There

was a Robert Lowell panel which, if it didn't sound good, had that New England rectitude I'd travelled thousands of miles to get a purchase on. And what about "Points of Resistance?" I never did find out much about that one.

Why indeed was I up so early and sitting in the front row at a panel on "Black Mountain and St. Mark's"? In a building undergoing asbestos restoration no less? Every worker in the place was wearing protective cotton masks around their lower faces, but no, we scholars and conferees were mask free! Why, Kevin, why? Two words: Miriam Nichols, who was giving one of the very few papers on Charles Olson. Has Olson's stock dropped? Hard to believe when he used to furrow so many foreheads in the 1970s. It takes today a brave woman to plunge ahead into the waters of Olson, as Miriam did, to come up with a fresh account of the "Special View of History" and its attendant philosophy of reading. But, had Miriam Nichols been speaking on grooming French poodles, I would have been there in that same front row. Years ago I had met her here in San Francisco at the very first Spicer Conference in the 1980s. Now she seemed younger and more stunning than ever (all that fresh air?) so that she seemed to be channelling the glamor of Dorian Leigh in that Avedon picture with the elephants. Every time she popped up in some exotic orange ensemble she seemed fresher and more invigorated, and more unearthly. Even her toenails, Dodie noticed, were painted orange. We declared her our Maine "It Girl." But, I also learned a lot from this panel about the systematic exclusion of Blackburn, Di Prima and Oppenheimer by the poets gathered around the St Mark's journal "The World" (from Burt Kimmelman's paper) and then got a Gothic charge out of Daniel Kane's primary research into the origins of the Poetry Project-pretty explosive if you ask me. I can't paraphrase all the ins and outs, and we'll have to wait for Mr. Kane's book on the subject, but apparently St. Mark's Church began the Poetry Project by boondoggling a huge (\$200,000) grant from the Federal Government earmarked to get Latino youth off the street in the days of "juvenile delinquency." Needless to say, the young people who flocked to the "Church" in its early days were almost all white middle-class bohemians who had been run out of the Metro and the Deux Magots. Ethical problem in accepting federal money at the height of the Viet Nam war? Or was the thought, if they spend it on us, they won't be spending it on napalm? Anyway, Daniel Kane seemed a little conflicted about this, but I was lapping it all up, thinking of the Church now as a kind of House of Seven Gables, born in sin, dragging the sin behind it like the albatross, real Goth and suffering through centuries, although as Kane pointed out it has only been 34 years.

Lost in this Gothic fog I wandered right through the exemplary readings by Fred Wah and George Bowering, worried about my own paper I was supposed to give that very afternoon. Faces swirled around me, pink and gray like Morris Louis

paintings come to life. I plunged my gaze into my conference program, studied the afternoon's offerings. At 1:30 Lee Ann Brown would be presenting the restored, re-scored print of Helen Adam's 1963 film *Daydream of Darkness* (with other works of "poetic cinema"), with a new score.

It was great to have all these 60s poets in one place, but I wondered about the backstage negotiations and how it shook out that these particular ones appeared and other didn't. One British poet had already expressed his disappointment. "I crossed the fucking Atlantic and fucking David Antin isn't here!" So I cornered an organizer and asked him who they had hoped to get and couldn't. "Well, Creeley, of course. Barbara Guest almost came, but postponed til October. At one time we were almost sure we had Adrienne Rich." Dodie and I nodded, fascinated, seeing how the addition and/or subtraction of any one of these would have shifted the balance of the conference in one nebulous alternate-universe scenario after another. "Negotiations with June Jordan broke down," Deep Throat whispered (we were leaning against a pole). "John Ashbery, Ed Sanders, would have been swell. Ron Silliman. Joan Retallack." We gave each other knowing glances at the latter two—more poets of the 70s in the guise of 60s poets. Not that it wouldn't have been great to hear them, see them, hold them again! Our informant coughed as a passel of Canadians slithered by. We pretended we weren't talking. "And of course many of the leading figures are dead. Ginsberg, Dorn, Lorde, Zukofsky, Plath, Oppen, Eigner, O'Hara, Schuyler, Niedecker, Kerouac." Race against time in the noonday sun of Maine.

"*Daydream of Darkness*" was filmed over many months in 1963 here in San Francisco. The film, about 25 minutes long, once had a soundtrack (or did it?) (but perhaps a live track of a script of Helen Adam reading to music by Pauline Oliveros) and, when it was restored a few years back by the efforts of Kristin Prevallet, premiered to a tragic silence which some in the audience found oppressive. Since I thought it was fine in silence, I didn't know how I would like the new soundtrack, composed recently in New York by a group including Lee Ann Brown, Beth Brown, Nada Gordon, Drew Gardner and Kristin herself, but happily the new music track works supremely well, following the vague script outlines and featuring new renditions of some of Adam's own poems and songs. Wait till you hear Nada Gordon singing! She is like this eerie cross between Anita O'Day and Linda Thompson! Dodie and I sat there spines tingling up and down with enjoyment and envy, because it isn't fair, it really isn't, that she should have so many talents! When the lights went up I gathered my bags and scattered across the campus to join a panel in progress. (This form of attending, or seeming to attend, as many simultaneous events as possible is, I learned, called "panel-hopping" and was extremely popular last week in Maine, the draft between speakers

from the revolving door approaching gale force at times.) I rushed over to join up to the "Beat Women Writing" panel, but unfortunately missed hearing the paper on Lenore Kandel and wound up only at the very tail end of a paper on Ruth Weiss' "Desert Journal." This may not be a familiar book to many of you but if you lived here in the Bay Area and haunted the thrift shops like I do, you'd know it was the book most often found on the poetry shelves there, it's always that and some ratty old copy of John Brown's Body by Stephen Vincent Benet and perhaps in the chic-er neighborhoods Thom Gunn's "Man with the Night Sweats." Anyhow Kristin who had also ejected herself from the cinematheque took the stage to read her paper on Helen Adam as fitting between Harry Smith's "Anthology of American Folk Music" and Joan Baez's first album, but naturally keeping herself at a distance from both poles. An interesting discussion followed, during which my heart sank a little since the audience seemed completely conversant on every point I planned to make in my own paper. We were talking about the ballad genre and how freely it became mixed with pop music at a certain point in US cultural history, and how artists like Dylan and Baez seemed to "freeze" their versions of folk ballad material to a point where no one now is re-writing them to their own ends (perhaps copyright, that stern Minerva, has impaled artistic freedom once again) whereas in only the decade before, fluidity and potentiality reigned, and now, where does a recording like that Baz Luhrman sunscreen thing fit in? Kristin, by the way, always looked colorful and to-the-minute stylish, delivering her paper in elaborate shoes, clunky hip hop trainers that practically bellowed, "You can take the girl out of New York, but you (dot dot dot)."

Then it came time for my own appearance at the panel, "Dorn and Spicer" (Alan Golding said it should have been called "Cranky White Guys who Loved to Piss People Off") which was held in a long, low science type room with all the chairs mounted behind long flat tables that stretched out for yards on either side. Logically enough, as the room filled up, I sat there eyes narrowed to count all my true friends who showed up to hear me, Keith Tuma, and Charles Blanton, and made up a little list of those former friends who had taken it into their heads to attend the competition, which included yet another panel on Oppen and Bronk (Bronk! I cried out to high Heaven), a smart panel that travelled from Langston Hughes to the Black Arts Movement; a Berryman panel ("Berryman!" I screamed out, like Ignatius O'Reilly in that movie theater when they showed that Doris Day Rock Hudson picture "Must he come back from the watery dead to disturb my rest!"); a panel on experimental women writers & the big event, the John Wieners panel with the man himself in attendance. Or, I know, some elected instead to take a nap, motor into town to buy more liquor, pitch pup tents in Acadia National Park or just to get out of the conference funk I had, with each minute, more mired myself in. So making this little list I listened to Keith Tuma's paper on the close

friendship and literary retrievals between Dorn and Jeremy Prynne, which solved a textual problem while admirably raising as many questions as it purported to answer; and then heard Charles Blanton talk about the geography of "Idaho Out," with all the kick and pizzazz of the very latest in topographical studies. I felt I'd heard the last word on topos and concentrated instead on remarking to myself how very much Charles Blanton resembles the actor John C. Reilly (*Boogie Nights*, *The Perfect Storm*, etc., etc). Then when it came my turn to speak I simply shut everything else out and spoke my 1400 words—one word for every two miles it had taken me to get there. (If anyone wants a copy of my paper let me know I'll send it to you via e-mail).

The next event was the reading by John Wieners. Kathleen Fraser recalled how when she ran the Poetry Center at San Francisco State, many years back, she had invited Wieners to come give a reading but heard nothing from him again until the day before the reading when he rang the bell, suitcase in hand, announcing his presence. When she got back from work that evening he had a) re-arranged all her furniture; b) tried on all her dresses and c) written a poem for her, "For Kathleen Fraser and the Governor of the State of California." On Friday I sat next to him in the front row and talked at him blithely enough while he continued writing a special poem he'd written. He kept turning back and forth the pages of a spiral notebook polishing it off. In large capital letters it read, at the top, "A MIDDLE CLASS VOICE." John had several bags with him, each one fitting into several others, and all to be dumped into a shabby dark flight bag (that's what he called it, I'd call it a runsack), together with some clipping about movie stars, packets of hotel sugar, stubby pencil ends, scraps of worked-up paper, those devotional renderings of dead saints we used to call "holy pictures" when I was a Long Island altar boy, and each one had to go back in its rightful place before he could give his reading. "Kevin," he said, "I'd like to remind you, I would like the full-face shot of Edie Adams." Halfway through Steve Evans introduction, Wieners put the final period on his poem, capped his pen smartly, and lurched from his seat, then strutted with aplomb to the podium, where various copies of his books. Some microphone confusion, but the reading began with "A Middle Class Voice" then went on to include a pair of book reviews as a gesture, I take it, to his academic surround. One was on the wonderful "Mr. Skeffington" by "Elizabeth," which I remember better as that great Warners 40s film where Bette Davis is the most beautiful woman in town and Claude Rains marries her only because he's got the money to save her once-proud family from ruin, and then she gets smallpox and he goes blind and he continues to think of her as beautiful and she doesn't discourage him but he knows anyhow, and she says, "A woman is beautiful only when she is loved." Well, Wieners mumbled and grumbled through many pages of "Beyond the State Capitol" occasionally raising his voice in an

oratorical style, but never for very long. I had the feeling that many in the audience were confused, some moved to pity by the waste of it all, other cheered by Wieners' perceived control of his own performative style, still others fascinated by the Walter Brennan-style grubstake dishevelment of Wieners' "look" (his hair, for example, long hair which looks like a rubber band is tying back, but no, it's just the way it's been molded over the years) and most I think felt brushed by something profound tho' hard to name. I remember going to see, as a youngster, the lectures of Maria Callas during her "master class" at Juilliard and her once encouraging a student in some phrase or another by actually singing it herself, and the look of surprise and dismay that crossed her face, the mouth moving and the ears taking it all in, and the brain registering who knows what wiggly graph of time, grief and pride. Well, that's what I was feeling anyhow listening to John.

Afterwards they were all over him to shake his hand and or to renew old acquaintance and he must have been feeling pretty good about himself and about us. I gave him the full-face photo of Edie Adams and he found a place for it in what he called the "front" of his flight bag.

I went next to the plenary session that Bob Perelman gave on Melvin Tolson's "Harlem Gallery." Not knowing much about Tolson, and in 45 minutes Bob managed to cram a good deal about the poem, but wow, he had a handout with 30 or 35 quotes from the poem, and 45 minutes into his talk, he was only guiding us through example 4. His enthusiasm carried him through however. Michael Magee has reported the denouement in which Marjorie Perloff, not persuaded by Perelman's eloquence, averred her opinion of Tolson as a "minor poet." On the face of it I'm ready to disagree and take Tolson for a major poet, but if the criteria are that Major Poet X has to have had influenced other, later Major Poets who knows? What's major anyhow (or why is it so important)? Tolson's utility to poetry may be in his extreme example as modernism turned both inward and outward at the same skewed moment—its difficulty matched only by its openings towards the public and the "outside" it (agreed Perelman and Perloff) had little hope of reaching while the 60s carried themselves on. Now that "Harlem Gallery" has been republished, it will be interesting to see what happens to it during the next 10 years. Apparently, like ARK, all of it is written in lines completely centered down the middle of the page—what's that about? To me centered lines foreground themselves and enough is enough, or maybe I've just read too much Michael McClure??? Michael (Magee) has also given us a good account of Lorenzo Thomas' paper on the Black Arts Movement so I'll skip right ahead to the event I'd been waiting for all week, Carla Harryman's staging of "Dutchman" by LeRoi Jones.

During the past few days we'd seen so little of Carla and of her cast, for they were in continuous rehearsal, and having worked in the past with Carla I envied her actors the experience they must, I thought, be undergoing, the deep, deep immersion into a sometimes intractable text so that, when the light breaks, it breaks with a Vermeerian simplicity and beauty. Carla had chosen a noticeably thin cast—I mean literally, physically, Lee Ann Brown so supple and small, Lorenzo Thomas as the narrator (and conductor) cleverly playing both parts and himself so dashing and slender, and Steve Benson, the veteran Language Poet and now Maine-based psychiatrist who came to visit the conference, a happy reunion for me, for the Bay Area lost a certain *je ne sais quoi* of gravitas the day he left us, and Steve almost preternaturally thin playing a drunk strap hanger in the NYC subway, weaving almost thinner than the strap itself he clutched, and all this set off marvelously by Mark McMorris with his solid dependability as the hero, Clay, a comfortable cuddleability that Carla brilliantly worked with and against as the rebel psychoses of Clay made themselves known during the brief 40 minutes of the play. But first there was the suspense, of course, that, owing to the [friction?] between Barry Watten and Amiri Baraka of the evening before, would the two empty chairs reserved for Amiri and Amina Baraka be filled? Carla held the curtain until the very last moment, until the Barakas indeed made an entrance as dramatic as anything that ensued, and then all eyes were riveted on the stage. After almost forty years, the play still holds up, albeit the extreme violence with which Clay dismisses Lula (is that her name) has this nasty overtone of misogyny maybe it didn't have in the original production? Carla chose to underline this ugliness by freezing Lula's body across Clay's lap like a Pieta; a break out of theatrical representation on a different scale than her other innovations. (Maybe I'm wrong about this?) Maybe, also, there's a little bit too much of a Rod Serling feel to the very very end of "Dutchman," with yet another white woman approaching Clay, so the audience feels, we are in the middle of the twilight zone of endless repetition till the cycle of abuse comes to an end? If so, it had a period charm that took us right back to the 1960s whether or not we wanted to go. I sat right next to Asa Watten who was videotaping the entire thing and Asa, if you're reading this, I'm sorry I said the other day that you were 13 when of course you're 15! It seems like mere minutes ago I was hauling you on my shoulders over and over in that sunny Mission Street loft during the months of rehearsals for "Memory Play"! And also for implying that you had no other interest in the conference than playing chess, for out of all of us, you were at the same time the most engaged and the most welcome in every circle I saw you in. But you will forgive me with the quickness of youth, I hope, love, Kevin.

It might have been at the bar afterwards that one conferee, lacking a name tag so I don't know who she was (or what was her speciality), told me that she had read

Dodie's article in the Village Voice about our marriage, and what she wanted to know was, if I was a transsexual (and her tone seemed further to ask, if so, what kind)? I was so flabbergasted I didn't know what to say! Shut up for once, and all I could say was no, I didn't even say, I wish I was! But, shaken to the core, I have to stop here now and won't even try describing the rest of the events of Friday night, June 30!

— Kevin Killian

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What I Saw at the Orono Conference 2000, installment)

14 Jul 2000

Part IV (final

The final installment, closing out the week — the Baraka-Watten debate staged, of all places, in the cafeteria, and then the long dispersal homeward.

By Saturday morning our horizons started to shrink, as we noticed that all panels, formerly held in many different college buildings, were from now on to be given only in one building, "Corbett." With this miniaturization of scale we began to notice that some of us had slipped away. Maybe a cue from the popular TV program "Survivor"? Anyway on Saturday at 8:30 I was up and at em, moderating a panel on Lorine Niedecker, with three panelists all of whom came, as I did, from California-Susan Dunn, Tiffany Shockley and Elizabeth Willis. Is California the center of the Niedecker nexus now? One version of it anyhow. Susan Dunn pulled out a terrifyingly thick stack of large index cards and proceeded to read Niedecker as a nature writer in the vein of Rachel Carson or Aldo Leopold or Thoreau. What was interesting most about this reading was the specificity of detail La Dunn was able to dig up concerning particular legal and societal challenges faced by Wisconsin environmentalists in the 50s and 60s. She showed a rare (library) copy of "North Central" that had the bibliomanes in the audience drooling, asking us to consider it as a work not only of collage but of recycling (I think). Liz Willis's imaginative take on Niedecker concentrated on that one poem, oh, what is it called, but you will remember there's a watcher in the woods who comes out from hiding to witness a church wedding? Anyhow Liz connected this poem (and others, like "For Mary Shelley") to Niedecker's use of two Hollywood films, James Whale's Universal "Frankenstein" and Clarence Brown's "Possessed" (from MGM). (Is the final line in the woods-wedding poem "Possessed"? Both films oddly date from 1931, evidently a banner year for moviegoing in Fort Dix. Liz related the plot of "Possessed" insofar as it presaged certain events in Niedecker's own life so of course I warmed up to this one quick. Joan Crawford plays Marion, a lowly assembly line worker in a Midwest paper box factory, who hungers for excitement and gets same when she meets wealthy playboy attorney

Mark Whitney (Clark Gable). He's married though, so out of the deal all Joan gets is a fabulous penthouse and wardrobe and a ruined reputation. You can see a) *Possessed* is a pre-code movie and b) the Niedecker-Zukofsky story laid bare? At any rate the strivings towards glamor and the high life we sometimes miss when we read Niedecker's work. How about Crawford's later film from her Warners noir period, remarkably enough also called "*Possessed*," where she has that insanely strange crush on Van Heflin and his whole family, breaks down to primitive theremin soundtrack, winds up staggering through the streets of Los Angeles with amnesia. Isn't this the Niedecker of the bewildering "For Paul" poems? I'm kidding. Kind of.

Also at Corbett were the next two plenary sessions, Albert Gelpi's discussion of Levertov and Duncan, and Lynn Keller's survey of the early poetry of Kathleen Fraser, Fanny Howe and Rosmarie Waldrop. I'm afraid I had to slip out of this latter one a bit early in order to gobble down some lunch before the main event, the long awaited debate between Amiri Baraka and Barrett Watten. It was first of all strange that the only place that could be found at short notice to stage this debate was the cafeteria itself, where we had all spent so many convivial hours introducing ourselves to Maine cuisine such as Whoopie Pies. And in the middle of lunch hour too, so it reminded me of Civics Day in high school, or even earlier, that school where you brought in 3 cents and they gave you milk, but you're too young to remember that. Tables cleared, Baraka and Watten sat down, with Ben Friedlander and Maria Damon (moderator) nearby, to tackle some of the issues raised in the heightened space after Barrett's talk on Thursday, "The Turn to Language after the 1960s." Well, I don't know what to say but it was extraordinary. Two terribly brilliant men, well matched in oratory, and with the stakes raised about as high as they could go. And yet Baraka's contestation, that Watten-and by extension almost everyone in attendance at the Conference-had judged the 60s a "failure" for one reason only, to achieve safe, respectable, cowardly bourgeois careers in academia, was on the face of it a difficult one to prove, though it did make for some lurid headlines. Before long the debate had become a series of Socratic jabs, as Baraka made Watten back up before every statement to define his terms. "What **is** Language Poetry, can you answer me that?" "And that makes it different **how**?" So the audience was pressed back, back, further into the original terms of debate. This might have grown boring had not Baraka often varied his approach with a different kind of questioning, sometimes jocular and comic, sometimes wildly improvisational. We learned that despite all his faults Allen Ginsberg had been an anti-imperialist poet ("Fuck you America and your atom bomb") until a certain point in his career where Baraka had found himself reluctantly parting ways with his comrade. Ginsberg had fallen victim to the proto-Fascist Chungpa Rinpoche who had stripped W S Merwin and

his wife of their clothes and forced them to appear naked. Ginsberg had also gone **too** gay to the point where he came mistakenly to value gay liberation above the liberation of all peoples and the anti-imperialist struggle in general. Still, Watten had no right to defame Ginsberg as he had. This take on Ginsberg seemed at variance with anything Watten actually had said about him and, I can tell you, wasn't getting much sympathy from me. (I had a sudden fantasy of directing my own production of "Dutchman," in which the main characters would be played by LeRoi Jones and Frank O'Hara, O'Hara as Lula, the older, vivacious, sex-mad white woman of the Homintern who must, finally, be punished for her Personalist importunity.) The talk grew most heated over the point about which percentage of Language writers were now academics. All of you, as Baraka thought? Or "3" as I heard someone call out from the audience. (This issue will, or so I take it, be more fully explored in Andrew Epstein's investigative article soon to be published, is it in "Lingua Franca," anyway one to which I'm very much looking forward.) And hadn't, Watten asked, Baraka himself taught in the university system? All of a sudden it was very strange and ugly, but the tape will tell the tale and I believe all those interested in this magnificent passion play should avail themselves of the audiotape, then play it back yourself and revel in its drama and sturm und drang. At one point you'll hear Maria Damon ask Watten which books of Language Poetry she could recommend to her students as anti-imperialist, and he responded by describing briefly Bruce Andrews' book "I Don't Have Any Paper So Shut Up, or, Social Romanticism" (searching for the right title for it) and I asked him, later, why he hadn't told her about his own "Progress," surely one of the most beautiful, savage, moving and trenchant long poems I've ever read. Finally Barrett smiled and said, "You know why."

I left before the very end of the debate in order to catch the next pair of readings, those of Rosmarie Waldrop and Kathleen Fraser, back in the theater at "Corbett." Waldrop read first from the charming "Pro and Con" poem ("positions and junctions") and then settled into the meat of things with several selections from her novel "Reluctant Gravities," which she described as a series of conversations interrupted by meditations. "Basically it's prose poetry," she hinted, and this made my soul curl up a little at the edges, since the prose-poem mania that has infected the Bay Area has resulted in a swarm of hideously bad writing of every stripe, but then as she began to read I'm thinking, Oh thank God, this isn't prose poetry at all. What can I say! It was terrific, with real characters spouting a kind of miraculously eloquent and unreal dialogue like the best of Oscar Wilde crossed with the oblique strategies of Marguerite Duras, and so funny it would make a corpse sit up and grin. I could have listened to it all afternoon, yet even while I drank it all in so greedily I was on the other hand marvelling at the way in which Waldrop's theatricality, that tiny, vulnerable, assured voice gave one the illusion

of being in the presence of someone really wise, as though she'd had all the answers since birth and was dispensing them with the generosity and fierceness of the Oracle. A tremendous illusion like watching Ruth Draper and seemingly so effortless you knew it must have taken decades of practice. On the other hand Kathleen Fraser posed no answers, only more questions than you might have ever guessed existed, in her equally fine reading from her Selected Poems "Il Cuore." A function, I guess, of the contingency in her writing, where nothing at all is stable and all is predicated on the swirling masses of political and psychic energy surrounding the subject. Again, she might have read these selections aloud dozens of times before, and yet the awkwardness and difficulty of her delivery—itsself a skilled tonal gift—made them seem brand new as though these had only just occurred to her, maybe last week. Obviously I'm stressing the differences (between RW and KF) with too heavy a hand, as though they were embodiments of Leslie Fiedler's discredited "paleface" and "redskin," and obviously they don't exist in this duality of warm marble and cooling lava. But anyway by the time the last notes of "Wing" issued out, and Jeanne Heuving was dashing in front of Kathleen to perform this Marcel Marceau time is running out gesture, several sides of my nature were well sated. I stumbled out into the bright sunlight and my God, there was David Kellogg, having missed several days of the Conference apparently while waiting for different planes to take off and having to sit up all night in the Airport, finally arrived with his brother just in time to give his paper at the next round of panels, a heroic voyage for sure like the Relief of Mafeking. But, there I was with my cigarettes but no matches and I had to get into the car for the first time in days and drive up to the IGA and get some matches, and some more Tab. Lee Ann Brown came with me and we idled away, feeling vaguely guilty we were missing some important papers and panels, and yet also with the divine sense of freedom that comes from such devilry. We discussed her performance of the night before playing in "Dutchman," and then who among us in Orono was the cutest and/or most available, and why it's really not wise to have a poet as a boyfriend but on the other hand how other kinds of people don't really make good boyfriends either, because they just don't understand, and before we knew it we were back in the Parking Lot running into a panel on, mmm, "Marginalities."

Unfortunately we must have missed Mike Basinski's paper on "Dangerous Poetry of the 1960s" and wound up about halfway through Chris Alexander's talk on Jack Spicer's "Billy the Kid." I gather that Alexander was coming at "Billy" via a series of approaches that included, to my great pleasure, a discussion of Spicer's troubled relationship with the Mattachine Society, so that on the one hand (in the period) you had the uplifting and sentimental love stories of the Mattachine and their literary movement (say, the stories in "One," the official Mattachine handbook/zine), and on the other, you had the terrifying narrative of the Senate

Subcommittees on Homosexuality that tied gayness to treason (both forms of "weakness" inextricably linked), and "Billy the Kid" somewhere in the middle: as a kind of "realism"? Lots to think about there, and then John Landry took the floor and gave a paper on a poet I had never heard of before, called Bob Lax. Anyone within hearing distance of John at this conference now knows the details of Lax's life, but for the uninitiated he's still alive, extremely old, in some Greek island, Patmos I think, but once upon a time he had been the best friend not only of Ad Reinhardt but of Thomas Merton and Robert Giroux, and Billie Holiday cooked for him in New York. Not really a concrete poet but sort of. Nineteen films have been made of his life and work. Having missed all of them, I felt like I wasn't on the circuit, hadn't watched enough films or maybe just too many Joan Crawford ones. Meanwhile in another room at Corbett, Dodie was moderating the first panel on Plath and Sexton, and I gather that Susan Gilmore, who was that very pregnant woman you saw everywhere so beautifully dressed, gave a presentation that involved playing an actual tape of Anne Sexton's late, derided entrée into performance poetry backed by a rock band ("Her Kind") which captivated Dodie completely. To the point that, in the days since we've come back, Dodie has gotten in touch with Diane Middlebrook and found out how to get her paws on the complete unreleased tapes of this strange marriage of sound and music (Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas Austin I guess). (But first she searched for bootleg copies on eBay.) But these, the Lax presentation and the Sexton "Kind" tape, were the kinds of paper that I had missed, in a way, the revelation of something entirely new or previously dismissed, shored up by research and discovery. In the men's room at Twitchell Village, to all kinds of noisome accompaniment, Mark Scroggins related, in the perturbed tone of one biographer to another, how he had attended every Zukofsky paper given at the Conference, and while several of them were excellent, not one of them revealed any "data," he said, pounding the urinal tap for emphasis. I nodded knowing just what he meant.

In the strange quiet—again, the feeling that we were being abandoned, that we were shrinking, that people's rooms were empty now, like Agatha Christie's "And Then There Were None," I wandered into Corbett again and into the theater space where, I realized later, the Jay Wright panel was winding up, with Lorenzo Thomas striding across the space fielding comments from the scattered audience members. Then Alec Marsh stood up and ended the session in order to bring on the man himself, Jay Wright. For crying out loud, this guy is incredible! And I really felt like a hick having really never heard of him before a few months ago when we were beginning our campaign at Small Press Traffic to bring Wright to San Francisco, and giovanni singleton patiently led me through the details of his life and career and all his glittering prizes, without once betraying by nuance or gesture how ignorant I am of this particular strain of African-American poetry.

(So obviously there's this double thing going on here; one's hungry for what one doesn't know on the one hand, and yet when confronted with that thing one's embarrassed on a naked, primal level.) Anyway, coming at this relatively late spot in the Conference, Jay Wright's appearance was what we show queens call the "eleven o'clock number," the electrifying star-making turn that you need to keep your audience from catching their last train. He looked great for one thing, in this excellent suit coat and tie, and he has one of those weary, amiable seen it all faces like Harold Nicholas (only younger of course) (in fact watching him up close you couldn't put an age to him, not really, I wonder if he ever was young or was he like Dietrich the embodiment from an early age of great emotional resonance and a timeless if ravaged beauty.) They say he doesn't submit to interviews any more, nor will he allow his work to appear in future anthologies, and as you know from my coverage here this kind of star trip always appeals to me. His voice is remarkably musical, and he can switch at the snap of a syllable from English to Spanish and back so that the stage seemed filled with voices like Prospero's island, and deeper and deeper into this world we sank so when the lights came up again a great quake crossed our minds and most everyone was drawn, like lemmings, down to the foot of the stage where he, Jay Wright, prepared to greet his fans and sign copies of his books, just I think for a closer glimpse. He had a paper bag filled with vintage copies of some early books, poof! They all went, just like that. Standing on line to meet him was like standing on line, as a child, to meet Santa Claus—I mean that magical and that exhilarating and un-real.

I think I'll truncate my report at this juncture, though there were many fine events and spectacles yet to come. The lobster banquet, the joint appearance of Michael Davidson, Bob Perelman, and Barrett Watten, the "Fluxus" event arranged by Bill Howe, Michael and Natalie Basinski, Keith Tuma and Lisa Phillips among others, during which Bill Howe mimicked vomiting to an amazingly realistic extent and for a really, really long time—mimicking the pent-up energy of the audience, who'd been force-fed simply tons of information and indeed booze for a week—and yet mocking us—and yet sympathetic to us. One final fashion award: Lisa Phillips for the most confident sartorial panache. When Kathleen Fraser laid eyes on her at the Fluxus event, in her snug velvet skirt and skinny tank top, she exclaimed to Dodie, "Who is that magnificent creature?" Phillips delivered her paper on Frank O'Hara and the visual arts, reading directly from her laptop, wearing nothing but another skinny tank top and a blue printed cloth tied sarong-like across her hips—like a California Gauguin. Dodie marveled at how perfectly her bra straps, visible on her bare shoulders, exactly matched the turquoise of her tank, the way 60s women used to dye their satin shoes to match their gowns. Wow! Dozens of more readers, including all the brilliant ones David

Bromige has named. Then the next morning when Andrew Epstein and I met, like two bargain-mad housewives, at the table where the official Conference T-shirts had been slashed to absolute basement level, and each picked one up. Inquiringly we looked at the woman manning the table and "No," she replied, "they're not gonna be reduced again." Shrug! The next morning when Robert Bertholf and I slunk into a panel on Robert Duncan and Ronald Johnson, while back in our "suite," Dodie began to pack for the long trip home. I'm sorry I missed the final plenary, in which Maria Damon was going to unveil her magnificent Sangreal: actual photographs ("data!") of Bob Kaufman actually working for the National Maritime Union in the early 40s. But by then we were speeding to Portland in order to stew at the airport for hours. I wandered out into the Maine night and again, smoking a cigarette under the lighted lobby windows, watching the party animals one last time. Kasey Mohammad, Michael Magee, Jacques Debrot, clicking the mouths of their beer bottles together in the rueful acknowledgment of the Three Musketeers. It all seemed so transitory and so precious, I thought of Lisa Robertson's words in *Exlogue*: "They wished to experience thought as we would be compelled to remember it; it became a languid impossibility. Their heart was lodged in an inaudible sentence. They wore nervousness on their spine and wrists. Their small, soft, edgy world was an intoxicant. The superb crumbling of the afternoon, so secret and so intense, identified itself as history." -Kevin Killian

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"Democracy, the Last Campaign"

03 Aug 2000

A quick flag for a web project on the 2000 Republican convention, to which Kevin and a crowd of Bay Area writers were lending their opinions.

Hi everyone, it's Kevin Killian. If any of you have web access you should check out this project that Margaret Crane and Jon Winet are doing re the Republican Convention this week. (It will continue right through the election). It's called "Democracy—the Last Campaign." Here's the URL

<http://dtlc.walkerart.org/>

And when you get there and see the stars or twinkling lights or whatever they are, click on one of them and that will take you to succeeding menus. I'm writing for it, so is Dodie Bellamy, Roberto Tejada has been writing, David Levi Strauss, oh, there's quite a few of us all giving our opinions on the Republican Convention from wherever we happen to be. Margaret and Jon are actually in the press booth in Philadelphia streaming video, shooting live interviews, the whole nine yards. Margaret called me very excited the other night. Apparently up in the press room

at the top of the Convention Center you get free long distance calls 24 hours a day!!!

Is there anyone in Philadelphia on this list, what's happening, write me back channel and tell me!

Thanks everyone

Check it out . . . See you

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assimilation and purity & language in lingua franca

04 Sep 2000

An Andrew Epstein piece in Lingua Franca — on whether the poetry avant-garde had settled comfortably into the academy — had set the list quarrelling. Kevin steps in on behalf of two writers taking friendly fire, Mark Wallace and Epstein himself.

Hi everyone. Murat Nemet-Nejat, I don't think you're being quite fair to Mark Wallace, though three of his sentences taken out of context may strike you as "a parody of academic prose." He's a very fine thinker and writer and the topic (standardized academic prose and how to bend it) is one he's spent a long time thinking about. Isn't this, the Poetics List, the place where he should be encouraged to share his ideas with the rest of us? I've read a lot of nonsense that seems to be academic prose parodying itself, but Wallace is relatively clear and straightforward, except when he wants to be I guess. So, I sympathize with your anger, I just feel it's misdirected in this one instance.

Aldon Nielsen, asking about Andrew Epstein "do we know this guy" sounds like we on the List are one big xenophobic clan but maybe you're being ironic about our place in the vast scheme of things. Having read the article in question, I urge all to borrow a copy of "Lingua Franca" and read the piece, otherwise you won't get a clear idea of what Epstein is trying to do, not from the reports here. In a way it's a little unusual for "Lingua Franca" to print such an article, for no one was sued, no one denied tenure, no charges of plagiarism or sexual harassment were brought. The truth is, Epstein consistently treats people with a great deal of respect, and I know, for example, that if they had hired ME to write the article it would have been a good deal bloodier and more sensational. Can't blame Epstein for the sensational lead-ins and pull-quotes invented by the editors. Like Mark Wallace, Epstein is a fine writer and a very good poet. His book "A Possible House" is excellent, romantic, sensual, very evocative and clever, he's like the Helen Frankenthaler of poetry, you just want to sink into that language and lounge. On the third hand I've been reading his article (in "Raritan") about Frank O'Hara's poem "Choses Passageres" and I can confirm he's a terrific scholar. We live in an age of great O'Hara scholarship but Epstein's article ("Frank O'Hara's

Translation Game") is simply breathtaking with its combination of thoughtful analysis and the old-fashioned textual research that, in this case, should have made headlines—in this case, Epstein's discovery that, in composing this poem, his only poem in French, O'Hara consulted a particular French-English dictionary that, once newly re-consulted as Epstein does, explains in every instance, from line to line, O'Hara's seemingly bizarre and stilted French expressions. Oh well, enough from me for a while . . .

We all know people who used to belong to the Poetics List and then dropped off because they were frightened or humiliated due to the natural heat and disputatiousness of our give and take here. I know I'm on this one other list, "alt-music kylie-minogue," where they're even more vociferous than we are here! But that's because they're talking about one topic all the time, the great genius of the Melbourne superstar Kylie Minogue, not ranging all over the world through all periods of poetic history for their light and limits.

— Kevin Killian

At 11:13 PM -0400 8/30/00, Murat Nemet-Nejat wrote:

In a message dated 8/30/00 7:27:04 PM, [REDACTED] writes: For instance, take the issue of standardized academic prose, of which Bernstein and many others have been critical. Can one still be an academic and not right critical articles in the bland prose of the "proper" critical journals? The answer seems to be both yes and no..... This itself seems to be a parody of academic prose. Murat Nemet-Nejat

At 9:44 PM +0000 8/26/00, [REDACTED] wrote:

The September issue of _Lingua Franca_ just arrived with an article by Andrew (do we know this guy) Epstein on the question of, in the words of the editors, "Can the McPoem busters enjoy the happy meal of success?" My doctor has ordered me to stay away from such meals —

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3 things to do

05 Nov 2000

Three recommendations, characteristically assorted: a book, a magazine cover graced by his cousin, and — with no more embarrassment than for either — a festival screening of a sex tape he had once made.

Hi everyone, it's Kevin Killian. I went to this great reading the other night here in San Francisco and want to recommend everyone buy this one book, "Uncle Chen's Oriental Slapstick" by Chris Chen. It is published by INCIDENTAL PRESS, PO Box 423058, San Francisco, CA 94142-3058 and it costs \$6. The title makes it sound a bit silly but it is not, I'm finding the book very provocative and stirring, one of the best books of poetry I've read in quite a while. In person Chris Chen is a tall well built fellow who might have been a bit nervous reading through

most of his book, I'm glad I sat in the front so I could hear it all pretty well. In one dramatic section of the poem he was assisted by Pamela Lu, who played the Narrator, while he (Chris) played Buddha and Chris Daniels played Socrates. But mostly it was just him.

In other news I hope all of you bought the October issue of MS. magazine. On the cover was my cousin Sarah Jones, a wonderful poet slash performance artist slash Ruth Draper type who also stars in the new Spike Lee movie "Bamboozled." She is amazing!!!

New Yorkers who are free on Saturday afternoon November 18 should head over downtown to 2nd and 2nd to see me in one of my greatest performances in the revival of "Taking Back the Dolls" (1994) which is part of the 2000 NY Lesbian & Gay Experimental Film Festival. This is the tape for which (knowing I'd have to be having sex on tape) I lost 30 lbs and then the shoot was delayed, yikes, and I must have gained 10 lbs in the interim (but still I look pretty good) and Cliff Hengst and I had sex while the director to reassure or inspire us kept playing one song over and over again on loop You Only Live Twice by Nancy Sinatra. It was the day Kurt Cobain died if I remember correctly. Here are some details of this showing:

The Third-Sexers

An audacious program of film and video about Homosexuality, at the 14th Annual New York Lesbian and Gay Experimental Film Festival - MIX 2000 3-D glasses provided!

Date Saturday, November 18 Time 4PM Place Anthology Film Archives, Courthouse Theater Second Street @ Second Avenue, New York City TRT 79:00 curated by Cecilia Dougherty

MIX Festival 2000 Program information

Finding yourself a little too mainstreamed in the characters that populate independent gay and lesbian features? Don't recognize your friends and lovers in the wholesome glossy imagery? Our relentless drive towards visibility seems to have given us more than we wanted, as we leave the theater unfulfilled by the assimilated plastic people who ostensibly represent us. Fortunately there are still a few alienated outcasts who continue to make excellent creative and sexy films and tapes, who eschew the plastic in favor of the pariah, and who insist on a vision that's both wild and reality-based.

Bypassing queer theory and inventing new dialogues, this work goes back to the source — to pre-liberation homosexual identity and all the problems and imaginative solutions entertained therein. New trajectories from the olden days to the present are provided: high school quandaries, genuine Internet sex,

identity vampires, unfocussed glamour, and nostalgia without irony. The 5 films and videos in this program describe contemporary queer reality in ways that acknowledge the theories of academia, but also maintain that each new generation remains completely at odds with the world outside. Troubled youth, sexy beauty professionals, Parisian Internet aficionados, and a love story from 1969. What are you waiting for?

Screening order and tape descriptions

Chisholm (Robby Abate, 1999, US, 10:00, 16mm, color, sound, 10 min., world premiere) High School graduation is a milestone of adolescence, and often the point of no return for many who are rendered so completely clueless about the next stage of their lives that they experience a cultural and sexual free fall. The scene is a rented room in a motel. The film takes place within the consciousness of adolescent homosexual awareness, and represents the first stage in knowing who is the sexual self, and what desire looks like.

Oblivion (Tom Chomont, 1969, US, 16mm, color, silent, 4-1/2 min., vintage) An expertly edited blend of elements from both poetic and diary modes, this is an erotic, passionate film that creates a shimmering fantasy of love. The film induces a sense of "oblivion" or forgetfulness as the exquisitely beautiful love object draws the viewer into his own deeply personal and sexy world. Dont forget to wear your 3-D glasses!

Ritual (Tracey MacCullion, 2000, US, 16mm, b&w, sound, 8 min., world premiere) Imagine the terror of discovering on ones own college campus a kinship of bloodsucking students enraged by contagious enigmas of sexual identity. The student body invades itself. It is made mad by lust for death and longing to become the other. An experiment in horror, it combines Dario Argentos brilliantly questionable narrative logic and George Romeros exercises in psychologically inspired camera work - and is an oblique homage to both.

Come Softly (Robby Abate, 1999, US, video, color, sound, 11 min., world premiere) Constructed of footage from the Internet including Internet porn newsgroups, live video conferencing, CNN and government sites, this tape exploits the Internet with a voyeurs passion. It also analyzes porn sites as a cultural site where a new kind of sexual alienation is invented, and where one can experience total loss of intimacy. This becomes a personal disaster, which is compared in scale to one of the most destructive airplane crashes in history, TWAs Flight 800.

Taking Back the Dolls (Leslie Singer, 1994, US, video, b&w, sound, 43 min., millennium premiere) A lesbian tale of high glamour, low camp, sex, drugs and supermodels. Sound familiar? The story is inspired by the 1966 Jacqueline

Susann novel, Valley of the Dolls, and scripted from scenes in the novel, from Vanity Fair magazine articles and other pop Americana. Finally infused with heavy doses of lesbian and gay male sex, love and psychodrama, Singer takes back the story - from Vanity Fair, drag entrepreneurs and pop culture vultures, and re-replaces it in a feminist homosexual context, where it belongs!

Bios of film/video makers

Robby Abate is a media artist from New Haven, Connecticut. He graduated from the Massachusetts College of Art with a BFA in Sculpture and New Media. Robby works in film, video and the Internet. His work has been screened at independent and experimental venues in Boston, Chicago and New York.

Tom Chomont lives in New York, and has been making films since the early 1960s. His films and tapes are both diaristic and trance inducing. His work is deeply personal, crafted with amazing tenderness, and filled with dense poetic imagery. Chomont is nothing less than an icon.

Tracey MacCullion is a filmmaker from Boston, Massachusetts who studied film at the Massachusetts College of Art. Tracey has worked extensively in Super 8 and is currently producing her third 16mm film. Her 1998 film Gash was presented at the most recent Whitney Biennial.

Leslie Singer began her film career in the underground performance and Super 8 art scene in San Francisco in the early 1980s. Films from this period were screened recently in the Museum of Modern Arts "Big as Life" series. Her video works have been screened internationally at artists spaces and in film and video festivals. She is co-founder of Creative Capital, a non-profit organization for artists.

HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!

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2001

Re: Lammies & the small press

15 Mar 2001

Silliman had lately held the Lambda short lists up as a model of the form — proof a prize could be done right. Kevin had just been asked to judge the men's novel category, and had his own view of how right they'd got it.

Hi everyone, just an addendum regarding the Lambda literary awards, about which Ron Silliman posted here last month, citing them as an example of how "short lists look like when people care enough to do them right."

I was very happy when the organizers called and asked me to be a judge for the novel category (novels written by men), because so many wonderful novels happened to have been issued in 2000, and then they told me the finalists had already been chosen, and surprise! None of the books I had in mind appeared on the list! Indeed the five nominees are all to one degree or another exercises in the same tedious realism that have dominated this award from the beginning! Apparently a team of 'experts' goes in and weeds out all the experimental and otherwise interesting work from the list before the judges get to vote. I would happily have given the prize to either Stephen Beachy ("Distortion"), Dennis Cooper ("Period"), or Lawrence Braithwaite ("Ratz are Nice")—I CAN'T REMEMBER IF I CAN USE THE WORD "EITHER" WHEN TALKING ABOUT THREE THINGS!!! Anyway all 3 books are ENDURING MASTERPIECES compared to the books that were actually nominated!!! and then there was a whole bunch of novels on a slightly lower tier of accomplishment (than my big 3, including very fine books by Brad Gooch, Brian Pera, C. Bard Cole, Brian Bouldrey etc etc. But instead I'm stuck with some REAL SNORERS. Funny though that the corresponding women's category is largely or entirely of experimental work, though here again they left out the novel of the year (Eileen Myles' "Cool for You.") Why is this? —

Kevin Killian Always Pondering

Ron Silliman wrote:

Noting this year's nominations for the Lambda literary awards, I see none of the problems about failing to acknowledge the role of small presses in poetry that is the case with the National Book Critics Circle. There are some good books and hard choices here. So yes there is an FSG & a Norton & a St Martins, but there's also Black Sparrow, Turtle Point & Talisman. There is even a special category just for small presses. Lesbian Poetry Mercy Mercy Me by Elena Georgiou, Painted Leaf The Horse Fair by Robin Becker, University of Pittsburgh A Map to the Next World by Joy Harjo, W.W. Norton On The Eighth Day Adam Slept Alone by Nancy Boutilier, Black Sparrow Signs of Love by Leslea Newman, Windstorm Creative Gay Poetry Boss Cupid by Thom Gunn, FS&G The World in Us ,ed by Michael Lassell and Elena Georgiou, St, Martins Word of Mouth, ed by Timothy Liu, Talisman Plasticville by David Trinidad, Turtle Point Press Pastoral by Carl Phillips, Graywolf Small Press Outline of My Lover by Douglas A. Martin, Soft Skull Press Bridge Across the Ocean by Randy Boyd, West Beach Books Kamikaze Lust by Lauren Sanders, Akashic Between Dances by Erasmo Guerra, Painted Leaf Undertow by Amy Schutzer, Calyx This is what short lists look like when people care enough to do them right. Ron

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The year's first months went to housekeeping — a reading notice, a change of address, a forwarded flyer. Kevin's own year begins in June, at the movies.

Re: poets in film

21 Jun 2001

The list had begun trading titles of movies with poets in them. Kevin's nominations, then as later, tended to arrive by way of Australia and the pop charts.

| There's a film from the 80's called "Ruben, Ruben" w/ Tom Conte

Hi everyone! For "poets in film" you should see the Australian film "Moulin Rouge," I've seen it twice, it is great, the character Ewan McGregor plays is a poet in Paris in 1899. It's the kind of film some of you will hate, some will love, but people in the audience were clapping and cheering after the different musical numbers and at the end everyone stood up and applauded, how often do you see that in the cinema?

And one extra plus, "Moulin Rouge" has a cameo appearance by Australia's greatest pop star Kylie Minogue, she plays the green fairy on the absinthe poster who comes to life and sings and dances and flirts with Ewan once he is drunk with the powerful absinthe!! Worth seeing just for Kylie!!!

— Kevin Killian

-----Mail2Web - Check your email from the web at <http://www.mail2web.com/> .

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Poets in Film

27 Jun 2001

The film thread again — this time a picture no one on the list could quite name. Kevin could always name it.

Murat Nemet-Nejat wrote:

"The movie, called "Art" I think, about a lesbian photographer (forgot her name). In this movie also a style representing the photographer's life and loves is intercut with her color photography which has a more intense version of the color palette of the rest of the film. Once again, the movie embodies a stylistic dialectic, one reflecting, intensifying, commenting on the other. Also, in the movie, an affair between her and a magazine interviewer ends up her taking the interviewer's nude photos to be published in the magazine -a subtle exploring of the relation between creation and mutual exploitation."

I think this film was called "High Art." I remember when it came out a few years ago, people were commenting on how the director or writer Lisa Chodolenko seemed to have taken all of Nan Goldin's seediest traits and told Ally Sheedy to play her like a tragic heroine. I would have liked to be a fly on the wall when Goldin met Chodolenko! "High Art" is kind of an East Village "All About Eve" as

the young straight woman attempts to outdo her wounded mentor in both art and sexuality. The younger woman if I recall was played by the Australian actress Radha Mitchell who later became an action heroine in one of my other favorite pictures PITCH BLACK! Mitchell is always great. Like Kylie Minogue, Russell Crowe, Guy Pearce she began her career on the Australian soap "Neighbours."

"High Art" by the way also features in a small part a really great NY writer, Laurie Weeks, who appears during a party sequence and stares into the camera looking drugged out and decadent. And nobody who sees it ever forgets Patricia Clarkson, who plays the Nan Goldin character's best pal, a washed-up German actress and chanteuse who once worked for Fassbinder et cetera. Clarkson does a really funny job she is like Patsy on Ab Fab channelling Nico.

Ok, enough background from me! Keep up this enjoyable thread of "Poets in Film." have we all seen Charles Bernstein yet in the Van Sant film? — Kevin K.

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Poets in Film

02 Jul 2001

By now the Poets in Film thread had drawn a small crowd — Cassie Lewis, Halvard Johnson, Pete Spence all pitching in — and Kevin was happily fielding every serve at once.

Cassie Lewis asked:

| *Did Crowe start in "Neighbours"? I remember him from wonderful films like "The Sum of Us", "Romper Stomper" and "Proof", all landmarks of Australian cinema...*

Hi Cassie, check out

http://www.ananova.com/entertainment/story/sm_218312.html

yes check out this link in which Russell reminisces about joining "Neighbours" to break up Kylie and Jason (1987). When I seek to know more about on Crowe, I go to the fabulous fan site, "Russell Crowe: The Prose and the Passion," which for some reason takes as its epigraph Forster's famous line from "Howards End" — "Only connect the prose and the passion, and both will be exalted...."

Halvald Johnson replied:

And there was, in the last decade or so, a film about a blind photographer. Since my mind's becoming more and more like a steel sieve, I've forgotten its title.

This is indeed "Proof," one of the films Cassie was referring to. Hugo Weaving (so evil in "The Matrix" and so funny in "Priscilla Queen of the Desert" was the blind photographer, and Russell was this loser dishwasher guy whom Weaving falls in love with.

Pete Spence added:

the films generally discussed so far are all very middle of the road films all only slight alternatives to the dominant film culture almost ordinary etc etc//

Hi Pete! I myself have acted in many unusual "underground" films that represent complete challenges to Hollywood hegemony. I bet a lot of people on this list will say the same, if pressed. Is this the kind of thing you mean? But innovative works of art or poetry seem to derive themselves just as rapidly from the middle-of-the-road cinema (what would Joseph Cornell's "Rose Hobart" be without Rose Hobart herself?) as from the films of say Stan Brakhage or Sadie Benning. Thus Hart Crane's "Chaplinesque" or Frank O'Hara's "Lana Turner has collapsed" etc etc, so we're in a double dilemma that resolves itself eventually down the road.

— Kevin Killian

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"Poets in Film" re-opened with new evidence!

10 Aug 2001

The summer's film game one last time, and its happiest catch — filed live from in front of the television, with Dodie beside him.

Were Dodie and I the only ones watching "WE" channel last night, Women's Entertainment and the Cinematherapy series came on and they showed Judy Blume's "Forever" from 1978? The film opens with two teen girls headed for a wild party in the Marin headlands and Diana Scarwid is the hostess. Then the party starts with a montage of everyone having fun, smoking cigarettes, pairing off, drinking beers, lots of cocktail party conversation, dancing, (to Cherchez La Femme that old soul hit from the 1970s) and there's this poetry girl sitting there on a couch reciting poetry, the camera cuts back to her, and Dodie screams, "She looks just like Cole Swenson!" Then we both screamed, "It is Cole Swenson!" — But young, or even younger than she is now. She looks like she's about 15 but even so, even if you weren't watching the screen, that deep enchanting whiskey voice would give her away! The film was made 1978 by John Korty, we kept watching and watching but alas the main plot of the story took over, Stefanie Zimbalist falls in love for the very first time with this dweeb boy who used to play Almanzo in "Little House of the Prairie." Actually Stephanie is pretty good, but we just wanted to see more of Cole!!! PS, in the credits it says, "Poet . . . Cole Swenson." YAY! More poets in the movies!! Hooray for "Cinematherapy"!

— Kevin Killian

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A month after this the towers fell. When Kevin came back to the list, its weather had changed under him.

White Rabbit

26 Sep 2001

The play was his own, made with the video artist Kota Ezawa and the visiting German collective Hobbypop Museum; the title, and the rabbit, he borrowed from Spicer.

If you'll be in San Francisco in October, please come and see my new play WHITE RABBIT written in collaboration with the videographer Kota Ezawa. The play will be shown at New Langton Arts (1246 Folsom Street between 8th and 9th) on two Friday nights in succession, October 5 and 12. The painters, filmmakers, architects and sculptors who comprise the collective Hobbypop Museum are making their first visit to the US and are turning the space into a huge installation celebrating German fantasies of San Francisco history. In this setting we will stage a drama on the same theme and with the same title, using action painting, computer animation, large musical numbers, tape and sound effects, extravagant costumes, video commercials and a cast that blends local poets and artists with our visiting German counterparts. Jack Spicer wrote (1959) "A white rabbit absolutely outlined in whiteness / upon a black background." In German and English. Call for reservations [REDACTED]

Rupert Adley, Taylor Brady, Norma Cole, Gerald Corbin, Thea Djordjadze, Peter Elting, Kota Ezawa, Craig Goodman, Glen Helfand, Sophie von Hellerman, Cliff Hengst, Scott Hewicker, Tanya Hollis, Karla Milosevich, Nick Laessing, Dietmar Lutz, Andre Niebur, Rex Ray, Jocelyn Saidenberg, Marie-Celine Schaefer, Wayne Smith, Suzanne Stein, Markus Vater in WHITE RABBIT a new play by Kota Ezawa + Hobbypop Museum + Kevin Killian . . .

New Langton Arts (San Francisco), October 5 and 12, 2001, 8:00 p.m.

Our largest show ever! Same low price. From Soho to Singapore, bring your body to the floor as an embittered singer tries to break off an incestuous affair with her drug-addled son, Ari. Two jaded Las Vegas magicians reflect on the twists of life that have bonded them together for fifty years. An action movie hero surveys the wreckage of his career and a fading link to an American political dynasty. One rabbit is rescued from vivisection, another is worn for good luck, a third is clutched in a little boy's hand. Mayor Willie Brown welcomes the crew of a cheesy "reality TV show" to San Francisco, where the indigenous spirits of Angel Island stage their own revolt. Mariah Carey draws strength from Kirilian realignment therapy, she's starting to see colors and explore her mixed race heritage. One pill makes you larger, and one pill makes you small, and the ones that Mother gives you don't do anything at all. When the shark bites, with its teeth, dear, scarlet billows start to spread. I'll be the wind, the rain and the sunset, the light on your door, to show that you're home.

Thanks everyone, Kevin Killian

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Ugh post of Gary

01 Oct 2001

The list had had a threatening post in the aftermath of September 11, since thought a hoax. This is Kevin, writing to his friend Gary, coming at that fear the long way round — through another online room he happened to belong to.

Dear Gary,

We had a similar experience in another list that I'm on, this one is devoted to fans of the pop singer Kylie Minogue, and in the hours after the bombings in NY and DC, it became clear that many on the list were very happy to see the TV news and to find out so many had died. Ordinarily the list is filled with trivia and fan effusions, endless threads about "Will Kylie's New Single Make #1" "Kylie vs Posh," "Will EMI Ever Release Kylie's Duet with Bono" et cetera, but because Kylie is well known in most parts of the world she has many Muslim fans too, from the fundamentalist countries, and soon our board was filled with new threads saying, "America Deserves This" and so forth. Largely these were written by very young people, 14, 15, 16 years old, but also from people in their 20s and 30s, from many countries. These expressions of glee then became the subject of intense debate on the board, from the US and UK fans who wanted the moderator to ban the worst offenders, to others who while deploring the untimely expression, pleaded that the fundamentalist (perhaps the "Taliban") position be given a chance to speak. One New Yorker outraged by the "America Deserves This" went ballistic so to speak and pronounced a fatwa on all Muslims world wide. The next day he retracted this, said he spoke out of fear, rage, and grief because so many of his friends had died in World Trade Center. In the weeks since all sides have continued to quarrel, make up, broker peace, renege on agreements, — then of course there are the above-it-all types who claim that "This is a group where we all love Kylie Minogue! Can't we all just be happy that she has reached #1 again with her biggest hit to date?" This issue still has not been worked out to everyone's satisfaction. But actually take it all in all I have found a quality of progressive thought and discussion on the Kylie list that is easily the equal of the quality on the Poetics List, and I imagine this is true of others and the other Lists they also belong to.

I only bring this up because, this was a case in which, instead of 1 threatening post, which we now think was a hoax or satire of some kind, there were literally scores of such messages and they represented in toto quite a shock to the system, and I'm not even in NY unlike you my dear pal!!!

See you soon . . . xxx Kevin Killian

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"The American Objectivists" and our auction

07 Nov 2001

The play was his, written with Brian Kim Stefans; the occasion was Small Press Traffic's yearly benefit, where Kevin reliably turned up as auctioneer.

Forgive the double announcement! I want to write a little bit about our upcoming play, "The American Objectivists," written by myself & Brian Kim Stefans. We have been rehearsing this week and I am quite confident you've never seen anything exactly like it! Our cast is divided into two groups, one half knew all about the Objectivists already, and the others I think believed that they were going to be acting out the life of Ayn Rand and her circle. But now, we're all on the same page.

Please try to come to its premiere (if you're in San Francisco) this Sunday, November 11th. It will be part of "LUCKY 7," the annual benefit for Small Press Traffic, from 1 to 5 p.m. at CCAC (California College of Arts and Crafts), 1111 Eighth Street at Wisconsin off 16th Street in the Mission. First we will have a nice cocktail type hour thing with Wayne Smith performing his own music. Then I will be the auctioneer for this year's exciting crop of literary memorabilia and manuscripts. As usual we have everything under the sun, the bad and the beautiful, including material from Edward Albee, John Ashbery, Paul Auster, Bjork, Joe Brainard, John Cage, Anne Carson, Clark Coolidge, Agnes de Mille, Jerome Robbins, Vaclav Havel, Tippi Hedren, James Merrill, Henry Miller, Czeslaw Milosz, Marianne Moore, Alice Notley, Doug Oliver, Carl Rakosi, Adrienne Rich, Laura (Riding) Jackson, James Schuyler, May Sinclair, Zadie Smith, Steven Soderbergh, Derek Walcott, John Waters, Jeanette Winterson, Slavoj Zizek, and tons more. (Catalogue on request as usual.)

And then, our play! So, the benefit starts at 1, around 2:30 we'll have the auction, and the play will start around 3:45 or 4. It will all be over around 5 and it costs only TEN DOLLARS! Hope to see you all there! For more information call [REDACTED].

Thank you everybody, hope to see you on November 11th (this Sunday), help support a good cause and have lots of fun!! — Kevin Killian.

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Re: With Strings

30 Nov 2001

Bernstein had announced a new book. Kevin's congratulations came, as they often did between friends, with a detour — in this case through Stephen King.

Charles, congratulations on your new book! I'm reading "Black House" now and seeing all the fun Straub and King are having with your name, Chummy.

xxxx Kevin K.

Original Message: -----

*I am pleased to announce that *With Strings* is now out and around. Below is the jacket copy and some information on ordering the book.*

For more information (and an image of the cover by Susan Bee):
<http://epc.buffalo.edu/authors/bernstein/withstrings.html>

or go to <http://epc.buffalo.edu/bernstein> recently updated with sound and text files

Charles Bernstein

A companion to My Way, Charles Bernsteins 1999 montage of essays, conversations, and poems, With Strings is a compilation of sixty-nine poems in various forms and styles, dating mostly from the 1990s. With its fractured nursery rhymes, distressed mottoes, runcible riddles, and inscrutable sayings, Bernstein takes us on a poetic trip that swerves from the comic to the political, from the whimsical to the elegiac.

"In With Strings, Charles Bernstein plays 'Charles Bernstein' with furious comedic virtuosity, very much as Lenny Bruce played 'Lenny Bruce' or Charlie Chaplin 'Charlie Chaplin.' The comparison of this remarkable collection of poems with the work of such serious and defiant comedians is indicative of only one facet of Bernsteins writings, but it is apt: his work is iconoclastic and revolutionary. Bernsteins poetry, however, is driven by aesthetic as well as social passions. The poems that are With Strings are addressed to the great questions perpetually facing art: What is it? Why is it? How is it? And in this context, inevitably, the presence of artlessness is discovered close at hand, never to be subsumed. It is in poetrys encounter with what is never to be subsumed that the brilliance of Bernsteins work erupts." — Lyn Hejinian

"Charles Bernstein is one of the finest poets writing today, and certainly one of our greatest satirists. His poetry presents a profound and highly individual critique of contemporary half-truths, speech forms, and modes of expression, and does it so graphically and with such great good humor that the reader is left breathlesslaughing and crying at the same time as the shocks of recognition register." — Marjorie Perloff

132 pp. Paper \$12.00 0-226-04460-2 Cloth \$39.00tx 0-226-04459-9 The University of Chicago Press

With Strings is in stock and also available by mail order from these independent book sellers:

^^Bridge Street Books in Washington, DC: E-mail your order to [REDACTED] with your address & you will be billed; or via credit card— call [REDACTED] — or e-

mail them with your address, order, card #, & expiration date & receipt will be sent with book —

^^Seminary Coop Books in Chicago: <http://www.semcoop.com>

^^St. Mark's Books in New York: <http://www.stmarksbookshop.com>

^^ Talking Leaves Books in Buffalo: <http://www.tleavesbooks.com/>

mail2web - Check your email from the web at <http://mail2web.com/> .

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2002

Poets Theater Opening San Francisco Friday 1/18/02

13 Jan 2002

Poets Theater was the tradition he loved best and worked hardest for. Here he opens Jubilee, a month-long festival mounted with Norma Cole and three San Francisco arts organizations at once.

If you're in San Francisco this week I hope you can come to the opening of "Jubilee," the poets theater festival we've been working on since March.

There will be five events, something happening every weekend of which I'll try to tell you more as the days go on by.

On Friday January 18 at 8 p.m. at the Jon Sims Center (1519 Mission Street, between 11th and South Van Ness) will be the premiere of two new plays, both of them oddly enough collaborations, first there will be a short play "Reduced" by Rachel Levitsky and Camille Roy. Lauren Gudath and Sarah Rosenthal take the two main parts, attended by a chorus of gossips played by among others Camille Roy herself, me, Mark Ewert and Dodie Bellamy—coaxed back from her self-imposed retirement from the stage.

A longer play follows, "Art Colony Survivor," which Norma Cole and I have been writing every Saturday for months and months. The play is a bit different than anything I have ever written—it has a philosophic bent foreign to my nature — but I'm sure you will like it all the same. Many local poets and visual artists are taking part in this play, which is based on incidents in the life of the composer Ruth Crawford Seeger. Our leading lady is the painter Laurie Reid. If you liked her work at the last Whitney Biennial, you will love her work in this. Making the opposite career move, the writer Brent Cunningham has turned to big gouache water colors and papier-mache to do all the sets for our play! Thus the separate worlds of poetry and visual art we try to conflate! "Art Colony Survivor" is a multi-media extravaganza, with tape and video insertions that will knock your eyes and

ears out. Anyway try to come if you can, it'll be both something different and something reassuringly the same. Call ahead for reservations [REDACTED].

JUBILEE will continue for four weeks (14 new plays in all, and one revival) as a joint project of Small Press Traffic, New Langton Arts, and Jon Sims Center for the Arts. These 3 organizations will join up as never before to help us celebrate the eons-long tradition of Poets Theater.

Thanks everyone!

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The list's spring ran to petitions and housekeeping — a stretch Kevin mostly sat out, or spoke through Dodie. He rejoined it in earnest with the summer, in his reviewing and answering voice.

Re: trials in literature

15 May 2002

kari edwards had asked the list for trials in literature. Kevin, a lifelong reader of courtroom potboilers, knew exactly where to send them.

Dear Kari

One of my all-time favorites which I re-read every year is THE BELLAMY TRIAL by Frances Noyes Hart (it's from the 1920s). If you can't find it let me know I'll lend you my copy. It's a novel.

Two others I loved as a teen boy were THE PAPER DRAGON by Evan Hunter and THE SEVEN MINUTES by Irving Wallace. (The latter became a film by Russ Meyer, not one of his best.) (And neither of these novels is a hundredth part as good as THE BELLAMY TRIAL.)

Love

Kevin

Original Message: -----

Question..

I am looking mainly for fiction or poetry, where the/a trial is the main theme... any thoughts?.

any suggestion welcome

kari edwards

Capitalism's ever-intensifying imposition of alienation at all level makes it increasingly hard for workers to recognize and name thier own impoverishment Guy Debord

mail2web - Check your email from the web at <http://mail2web.com/> .

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time travel / paradox, and also, Eric Giraud?

21 Jun 2002

Steven Shoemaker's thread on time and paradox had reached the movies. Kevin answered it, then attached a small personal appeal to the end, as was his way.

What about GROUNDHOG DAY with Bill Murray? I still can't figure that one out and I must have seen it four or five times. Maybe they explain it on the DVD.

PS, does anyone know how to get in touch with Eric Giraud the French poet, he called my apartment when I was out, leaving his e-mail address but his accent is too thick for me or any of my neighbors to figure out what he is trying to tell me, and so I'm missing significant portions of his e-mail address. Any replies appreciated, back channel.

Thanks everyone— Kevin Killian

At 03:01 PM 6/20/2002 -0400, Steven Shoemaker wrote: Hello All—Thanks for the good suggestions in response to my query on time (I'd love to have more!). I'm also wondering if anyone knows of interesting essays and/or short stories dealing with time travel paradoxes, multiple dimensions, and all that sort of thing. It occurs to me that I could use the old Star Trek episode "City on the Edge of Forever" where Kirk, having traveled back to 1930s Earth, must stand by as his true love (Joan Collins!) is killed in a car accident—in order to prevent the Third Reich from winning WWII (because in an alternate future, she becomes a peace activist who convinces FDR to delay entry into the war for too long). Anyone know of any particularly strong time travel episodes of STNG? I'm less familiar with that show, but seem to remember hearing there was a good "time" episode.

Steve

-----mail2web - Check your email from the web at <http://mail2web.com/> .

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Re: language

24 Jul 2002

Robert Corbett had run two of Sontag's titles together in passing. Kevin — who had given a book of elegies to the AIDS dead — cared enough to correct him, and to weigh Sontag's two books against each other.

At 10:57 AM -0700 7/23/02, Robert Corbett wrote: Sontag's book on "Illness as a Metaphor" was not about "romanticizing" aids, but the inevitable way in which certain prominent disorders becomes metaphors for experience of the general population . . .

I like a lot of what Corbett is saying in his post "language" but I think his simple typo will confuse some of those who aren't familiar with Susan Sontag's writing . . . It's just a slip of the pen (keyboard) in which he conflates Sontag's 1979 book

ILLNESS AS METAPHOR with her much later book on AIDS (AIDS AND ITS METAPHORS)—

Obviously the "Illness as Metaphor" book came too early to deal with AIDS. It was a groundbreaking book in its day due to its startling thesis—that disease is not a metaphor, nor a punishment, that it's just something that happens to the body, and that despite the overwhelming urge to use illness as a description of something else (often a zeitgeist—Sontag shows that TB, or consumption, was popular earlier in the 20th century as a convenient descriptive, allusive shorthand for current problems—think of "The Magic Mountain"—while by century's end cancer had become the "disease of choice" among litterateurs anxious to describe the social, moral, political conditions in which they found themselves.)

"AIDS and Its Metaphors" is a markedly inferior book of little value, you get the idea she was just re-treading everything she had said in the first book, except eerily enough she sometimes winds up suggesting that AIDS is a different order of disease than, say, cancer and yes, indeed, it may therefore be used as a metaphor, and/or may with propriety breed the sorts of metaphors attached to it, which she had so firmly ruled out earlier. However from what I understand she donated all the money she made from this book to AIDS relief and activist efforts, so that's as they say all good. Otherwise a horrid disappointment and a time waster par excellence.

— Kevin K. 2002

People talked about societies as "schizophrenic" in a loose way because it was compelling metaphor, not because there could be a point-by-point comparison between the experience of schizophrenia for an individual and the experience of society. This metaphor was also licensed because early theories of schizophrenia suggested that its origin was social. Gregory Bateson wrote of "schizogenetic" societies (and there is data that shows the disorder varies according to national borders). RD Laing's work is clearly in this tradition, as was Felix Guattari's. So in a certain sense when these writers glorified schizophrenia as a form of "truth" about society, it was because schizophrenia was thought to be less hypocritical response to society than neurosis. They certainly did not mean to minimize the pain of individual sufferers or to glamorize it. It was their take on society in general that was dire. In any case, I don't think that these metaphors are very prevalent. There is certain datedness to the argument that hallucinations (whether organic or artificial in origin) reveal some truth about society. So a further point about illnesses as a metaphor is that they shift. Twenty years ago, we thought we were all schizophrenic. Today, the prevailing disease seems to be obsessive-compulsiveness. A few years ago, it would have been eating disorders. The difference is that while schizophrenics can seem like prophets or seers, these sufferers are clearly victims. There was a certain optimism to the schizophrenic society argument that is absent from current ones. Robert — Robert Corbett "I will discuss perfidy with scholars as

*as if spurning kisses, I will sip Department of English the marble marrow of
empire. I want sugar University of Washington but I shall never wear shame and if
you call that sophistry then what is Love" - Lisa Robertson*

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Re: Attacks

30 Jul 2002

Jim Behrle had risen to defend a list regular named Alan, with a word about how poets ought to spend their energy. Kevin, congenitally allergic to the word should, ambled in.

Oh I think Alan is a big boy, and well able to fend for himself. As for "People should spend more energy on their own work than trying to be clever and mean," you are trying to undo the entire work of the internet and Jim as Cher says you can't turn back the hands of time.

You are also implying that one's own work is devastatingly important and really, for how many of us is this true? I'm from San Francisco, here we zone out on any statement that begins "People should . . ." because they always sound so prescriptive, or do I mean proscriptive, but I'm from San Francisco where we conflate the two words like sourdough bread.

Original Message: -----

Alan—

Thanks for your most recent post. I think you should continue forward undaunted. I'm pretty tired of you being some sort of fashionable whipping post. The negativity and bitterness to be found on this list sometimes seems downright supercharged and malevolent. People should spend more energy on their own work than trying to be clever and mean.

Be well, Jim Behrle

Send and receive Hotmail on your mobile device: <http://mobile.msn.com>

mail2web - Check your email from the web at <http://mail2web.com/> .

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If you're interested in Kylie . . .

05 Aug 2002

A bulletin from the other half of Kevin's reading life — the tabloid half — filed, as ever, in deadly earnest.

—Minogue, there's a good article about her in this week's PEOPLE (US version) the one with the cover about J.Lo & Ben Affleck's Red-Hot Romance. It's on page 85 and 86 if you're standing in grocery line and have to flip to it quick. The article's accurate as far as I can tell and will help dispel many myths that have arisen around this strange cult figure. Nice pictures too, a bizarre one of Kylie

visiting with her difficult younger sister Dannii, backstage, in front of a multi-part vanity mirror that reveals the back of their heads—very Vermeer.

Also, "People" has a panel of experts who predict the winner on AMERICAN IDOL is going to be — Kelly Clarkson!!!

Who'd a thunk it?

— Kevin K.

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Re: Myung Mi Kim

07 Aug 2002

Myung Mi Kim's move to Buffalo had set off an argument about English departments and who counts as inside them. Kazim Ali had spoken up for her; Kevin, who knew her in San Francisco, seconded it warmly.

I agree with Master Kazim Ali on this one! Myung Mi Kim is an interesting poet, and a great teacher, and she's very sharp, funny, natural, the students at Buffalo will warm to her I'm sure, all right, maybe she comes across a little stilted in this particular press clipping, but maybe she was nervous! And her remarks may have been wrenched out of context, after all, someone inserted an apostrophe into her word "its" which I'm sure she didn't put in herself. Give her a chance. She doesn't need any defense from me, that's for sure, but I, like many others here in San Francisco, am sad that she's left us yet happy she's off to a place that I presume she will find even more appreciation (and money too I expect) (at any rate rents have got to be cheaper there LOL). Myung Mi Kim is a warm, honest, engaged woman with lots to offer to both readers and students. Go Buffalo!

— Kevin K.

I don't really understand these sentiments. Which English departments are you blanketly talking about? I mean—I guess it's sort of dumb to start debating about how much of an "outsider" or "insider" Kim is in her poetry, it's alarming to me—unbelievable, nearly—that one might read Kim's poetry and feel it in line with "acadominant discourse"—to me it is profoundly visceral, not a bit unpleasant (in the way one prefers art to be), and beautifully graspable/ungraspable. i am pleased—pleased—that there exist a few departments in this country that nurture, welcome, and help to cultivate new and innovative work...poets who are as radically different in style, technique, approach, and poetics as, just for example, Robert Creeley, Susan Howe, Myung Mi Kim, and Charles Bernstein, might find themselves attached to the same program... but i am puzzled when you say this is an "acadominant" discourse...dominant where? --- Murat Nemet-Nejat [REDACTED] wrote: Right on, Bob! Murat In a message dated 8/6/02 7:23:41 PM, [REDACTED] writes: hope not. For someone supposedly trying not to "capitulate to terms sanctioned and policed by the prevailing, dominant discourses invested in 'the point of the talk,'" she sure doesn't veer much from the acadominant discourse and outlook that's prevailed

in English departments for twenty years or more. —Bob G.
Do You Yahoo!? Yahoo! Health -
Feel better, live better <http://health.yahoo.com>

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Re: music

12 Aug 2002

A what-are-you-listening-to thread; Kevin's list runs, predictably, from Bowie to Abba by way of Kylie.

| *I'm not sure if you can get much of the stuff I'm gonna list at Borders*

I've been listening to lots of David Bowie and also

"Love at First Sight" from FEVER (Kylie Minogue).

The new SCOOBY-DOO soundtrack also has a great song by Kylie Minogue recorded during LIGHT YEARS sessions and only released now it's called "Whenever You Feel Like It."

One of Dodie's students loaned her a CD of the "LANGLEY SCHOOL MUSIC PROJECT/Innocence and Despair" from the 70s, been listening to that, it's super and I will be reviewing this for forthcoming issue of SHUFFLE BOIL.

Also, "ABBA Gold Greatest Hits" and

LULU, "Together" (Duets album UK import).

Yeepee, what a great summer in my head!!!

Almost makes up for the loss of Myung Mi Kim to SUNY Buffalo!

Oh well as Abba says, "The gods they roll the dice, their minds cold as ice, and someone way down here—loses someone dear."

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Books

16 Aug 2002

Two novels, lately finished and pressed on the list with the flat conviction of a man who reviewed for the love of it.

Two novels I've read recently

"The Tutor" by Peter Abrahams, possibly the best suspense novel I've read since Ira Levin's "Sliver."

"At Swim Two Boys," by —hmmm, now I can't remember his name! He's from Ireland and his first name is Jamie. Anyhow I didn't want to read this book thinking it was all going to be terribly naff—but it is terrific!! It's a long book but reads very quickly, after a few chapters you won't put it down till you're all done.

It's the story of the Easter Rising in Dublin 1916 against the backdrop of the concurrent Great War & the capture of Roger Casement. And it's a pastiche of the high modernisms of "Dubliners" and the beginning of "Ulysses." And it's this touching love story between two lower class teenagers and the mysterious older man who takes an interest in them. You read all this on the jacket copy and you think, what an awful idea, but take my word for it, it's awesome!! Just as good as "The Tutor" even if more ambitious.

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Re: Books

16 Aug 2002

Someone had read suspicion into the innocent business of naming books one liked. Kevin, disinclined to fight, put the question back to the room.

Hmmm, that's a provocative way of looking at it. You could be right.

What does everyone else think?

Cheers, Derek Rogerson! From— Kevin Killian

Original Message: -----

Is this like a role-call thing? To make ensure everybody ispolitical alignmetns?

The old 'ly' ?

mail2web - Check your email from the web at <http://mail2web.com/> .

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If you're in San Francisco this Friday Sept 6

03 Sep 2002

Another of his and Wayne Smith's pageant-plays, this one the life of David Bowie, staged alongside a Bowie exhibition across town. The cast list is half the pleasure.

Come and see our new play if you'll be in San Francisco Friday September 6. It's at the Lab, 2948 Sixteenth Street at between Capp and Mission, at 8:00 p.m. It costs five dollars to get in and you should call [REDACTED] for reservations since we are putting it on one night only. It's called FASCINATION.

You'll be watching this play, with its strange echoes of CITIZEN KANE and THE SWEET SMELL OF SUCCESS, and asking yourself, "Wait a second! Didn't I see this before?" Sure you did, it's the life of David Bowie, written up in pageant form by San Francisco writers Kevin Killian and Wayne Smith.

London . . . the late 60s . . . a group of young UK poets and musicians rallies around the aging mime maestro Lindsay Kemp, and from his lab emerges David Bowie, the man who sold the world to storm London's fickle pop charts. Next he conquers New York, where his life is endangered by fanatical fans, and gets jiggy

with black soul music in the Philadelphia of YOUNG AMERICANS. At his side, his indomitable soulmate Angie. The two of them keep inventing themselves over and over. Bing Crosby dies. Marc Bolan sings THE PRETTIEST STAR. The ultimate rock couple, Carly Simon and James Taylor, enters the twisted, androgynous Bowie world and their lives collapse like those little bags of popcorn. Then Bowie goes to Berlin with Brian Eno: heroes, just for one day.

Norma Cole is Nico, Kota Ezawa is Eno, Wayne Smith is James Taylor, Margaret Crane is Carly Simon, Tanya Hollis is Valerie Solanas, Kevin Killian is Angie, Cliff Hengst is Iman, Karla Milosevich is Hermione Farthingale, Scott Hewicker is Tony de Fries, Rex Ray is Lindsay Kemp, Craig Goodman is Marc Bolan, our large cast also includes Yedda Morrison, Jocelyn Saidenberg, Brent Cunningham, Gerald Corbin, Suzanne Stein, Elliot Anderson, Taylor Brady, and Zora Ezawa.

If you're not available on Friday you can come to our dress rehearsal this Wednesday at 6:30 and see it for free; though it will be a little discombobulated and the musical numbers won't be "frozen," you might still enjoy it. On Wednesday we will try to get out in time to watch the finale of AMERICAN IDOL (but better tape it just to be on the safe side).

This performance is presented in conjunction with FASCINATION: THE BOWIE SHOW, an exhibition at Gallery 16, at 1616 Sixteenth Street (San Francisco), August 15-Sept 30, call [REDACTED] for more information about the exhibition or visit the website www.thebowieshow.com.

Thanks everyone. — Kevin Killian

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Re: Zero Star Hotel by Anselm Berrigan, new from Edge Books

05 Sep 2002

Rod Smith's Edge Books had announced Anselm Berrigan's new collection. Kevin wrote in to cheer it — and its author, a son of poets coming into his own.

Good work Rod! It's a wonderful book and a big, huge quantum leap for Anselm Berrigan, whose previous work I have also enjoyed, but this book is really something different, it gives you the passionate can't-put-it-down experience of reading a great novel, and technically it's so assured you don't even notice how he, Anselm, is producing all his effects. The hero of "Zero Star Hotel" goes on a mythic quest; the story's told very simply, with lots of gritty detail and an attention to surfaces and realities that grabs your interest and won't let go. I can't speak highly enough about "Zero Star Hotel" but in the words of Paula Abdul, Anselm, you have raised the bar for all of us, you're my American idol now.

Announcing Publication of Zero Star Hotel by Anselm Berrigan 101 pgs, 7 x 10, isbn 1890311111, cover by Emilie Clark regularly \$14, order for \$12 plus free shipping til Oct 1. Also, available again, Berrigan's Integrity & Dramatic Life 64 pgs, 6 x 9, ISBN 1-890311-05-7, regularly \$10, order for \$8 til Oct 1. When ordering Zero Star Hotel you may order any of the following Edge Books, also postpaid, at these sale prices: The Sense Record & other poems, Jennifer Moxley, \$10 (regularly \$12.50). Dovecote, by Heather Fuller, \$8 (regularly \$10) Comp., by Kevin Davies, \$10 (regularly \$12.50) Ace, by Tom Raworth, \$8 (regularly \$10) Sight, by Lyn Hejinian and Leslie Scalapino, \$10 (regularly \$12) Aerial 9: Bruce Andrews, \$11, (regularly \$15) Marijuana Softdrink, Buck Downs, \$9 (regularly \$11) Errata Suite, by Joan Retallack, \$10 (regularly \$12) perhaps this is a rescue fantasy, Heather Fuller, \$8, (regularly \$10) Nothing Happened and Besides I Wasn't There, Mark Wallace, \$7.50 (regularly \$9.50) To Order: Send a check to the following address or email [REDACTED] with your order and address and we will bill you. Thanks for your support of Edge Books— our recent titles by Moxley, Fuller, Davies, & Raworth have all been well received. Checks payable to Aerial/Edge, POBox 25642, Washington, DC 20007.

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Re: humor theory

11 Sep 2002

David had a question of attribution that had nagged since a 1995 lecture on Blaser. This was the sort of thing Kevin answered before lunch — encyclopedic, exact, and glad to be asked.

At 4:56 PM -0700 9/10/02, dcmb wrote:

much that is valuable can be found via the indices of Slavoj Zizek's books. but who was the author to whom Peter Quartermain frequently referred in his talk on humor in the poetry of Robin Blaser at Vancouver in 1995? David

Hi David, I think this must have been "Syncope" by Catherine Clement, which discusses the laugh in terms of it being a rip into consciousness (very Lacanian) (and a wonderful book)

xxx Kevin K.

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Re: women in The New American Poetry

10 Oct 2002

The perennial charge against Allen's anthology — too few women — had come round again. Kevin, who had been through the papers at UCSD, answered with names and near-misses rather than heat.

Hi Mike,

Alan Golding's done a much more thorough job than I, but looking through the New American Poetry papers at UCSD Rare Books Collection, it seems there was a very real possibility that Joanne Kyger might have been included in the original

1960 NAP. (Perhaps her being overseas at the final count had something to do with her being left out—I can't recall right now.)

There were as well an additional number of strong female writers on the San Francisco scene at the time . . . as well as nationally . . . Jack Spicer's and Fran Herndon's "J" magazine printed some, Don Allen must have known at least some of this work, but as far as I know none of them missed the brass ring as bitingly closely as Kyger.

xxx Kevin K.

Original Message: -----

Hi all,

*A question for ye: there seems to be a general consensus that the fact that Don Allen's The New American Poetry 1945-1960 includes only a single handful of women poets is a real failing of the book if not of Allen's. My question is, which women poets do you think should have, could have, been included at the time - i.e. who if anyone did Allen miss that would have made sense right then and there. DiPrima, for instance? I know she was fairly new to the scene when the anthology came out (or indeed, was she not quite there yet, or *just* there as with Berkson?). And I also assume that poetic polarizations made someone like Plath unfeasible (so that, while someone might argue that she *should* have been there, no one could really argue that she *could* have under the circumstances, besides which its a little early for her too). Okay, speak.*

-m.

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From the horse's mouth

13 Oct 2002

He had settled the anthology question in the abstract; now he settled it in person, over a teppanyaki lunch with Donald Allen himself. Allen was ninety, and unrepentant.

I went to lunch with Donald Allen yesterday and asked him why, for example, Muriel Rukeyser wasn't one of the poets he included in "The New American Poetry." Was it because, as some have speculated, he considered her part of the "1.5" generation which included Patchen, Zukofsky, Rexroth. "No," he replied. "I just never thought much of her work. She was everything the book was supposed to be against. I had met her in Berkeley, but got to know her after I met Octavio Paz, first in Mexico City, then in New York. He wanted me to publish Rukeyser's translations of his poems. I thought they were awful." Her own poetry? "Does she have her partisans?" "I'm one," I flared out. "I mean, she's good and she's bad. We all have our ups and downs." He considered. We were at Benihana and the chef was throwing things up in the air and stabbing them with knives then pin-

ning them down on a big hot steel table and the steam was hissing like mad. "Bit of a sentimentalist." Afterwards I thought, but yet look at our dear John Wieners and he was a bit of a sentimentalist and what was wrong with that? But, it was all so long ago and far away. It's hard to transport oneself back to another time.

— Kevin K.

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Advice sought

28 Oct 2002

A working writer's practical worry: he wanted a film still for a book cover and didn't know the law. The list was, among its other uses, a place to ask.

Hi everyone,

Does anyone out there know more than I about permissions? Here's the deal, I want to use a still, actually a video capture, on the cover of my next book. It's a still from an old 40s movie made by 20th Century Fox. Can I just use it? Or do I have to get permission and if so, from whom and how? I feel like such an ignoramus asking these questions of you all, but if anyone knows the answers, I'd be oh so grateful and appreciative.

— Kevin Killian, San Francisco, CA (USA)

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Carol Muske

17 Nov 2002

A found book — Carol Muske's memoir of poets among the movie stars — reported back to the list with the delight of a man who lived for exactly this collision of worlds.

Has anyone read anything by Carol Muske I was at the library and picked up this book by her, "Married to the Icepick Killer: A Poet in Hollywood" and opening it at random I read the following lines:

"The house and grounds were a lovely combination of twelfth-century and contemporary—the original stone lookout tower stood near a large tiled swimming pool; a luncheon table was set under the olive trees near the low walls. Inside, the stones opened into vaulted space, room after room—upstairs there were bedrooms with views of the valley and mirrored and marble baths. Jorie and I talked poetry in front of the fire and over meals and far into the night."

I couldn't resist, I snatched it away with me! In this book also she talks about how one of her novels was optioned by Hollywood and she got taken to lunch to meet

its putative star, Michelle Pfeiffer. Here I always thought Pfeiffer an extremely intelligent film actress but this book sets you straight, apparently she, Pfeiffer is dumb as a post and can't even read "haricots verts" on the menu.

In another chapter Muske tells how she, and many other important US poets, get invited to the White House to meet Clinton and how he is tremendously smart and convinced a skeptical audience of poets that he knows as much about poetry as they do!!! One poet who was invited, Hayden Carruth, wouldn't go, citing Clinton's negative policies and refusing to be the "art that adorns the table of power." But everyone else invited showed up . . . I found myself asking myself, "What would you have done?" What a fantasy! But on the third hand, or first hand, I did love Bill Clinton and he had this great fantastic supernatural charisma. Anyhow, I gather from this book that Muske is a very well known poet and also you pick up here and there that she runs a Creative Writing Program in LA and got her masters from SF State and studied with Duncan, Di Prima, Creeley, Kay Boyle and Nanos Valeritis. Does anyone know any of her work?

— Kevin K.

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San Francisco Memorial Reading for Steve Abbott

25 Nov 2002

Steve Abbott had been one of the New Narrative's own, a San Francisco poet and critic dead of AIDS in 1992. Ten years on, Kevin was helping to read him back into the room, on World AIDS Day.

Hi everyone, hope that if you're free next Sunday, and if you're in the Bay Area, you can make it to this event on World AIDS Day. —Kevin K. There'll be lots of surprises.

World AIDS Day Reading: Commemorating Steve Abbott Sunday, December 1 @ 2 pm In commemoration of World AIDS Day, the James C. Hormel Center of the San Francisco Public Library will host a reading to honor the 10th anniversary of the death of Steve Abbott (www.steveabbott.org), influential San Francisco poet, critic and writer who died of AIDS in 1992. His daughter, Alysia Abbott, will be joined by writers Dodie Bellamy, Kevin Killian, Bob Gluck and others in remembering Steve Abbott's life and work.

Steve Abbott was a widely respected and prominent member of San Francisco's literary and gay community for nearly two decades. After moving to the City in 1973, he taught writing at University of San Francisco, served as managing editor of Poetry Flash, wrote a weekly column for the San Francisco Sentinel, and contributed to the SF Weekly and the Advocate. Abbott published five volumes of

poetry, three novels and a collection of essays before dying of AIDS-related complications on December 2, 1992.

The reading will be hosted by the San Francisco Public Library's James C. Hormel Gay and Lesbian Center, which houses Steve Abbott's papers. The Hormel Center is devoted to the documentation of lesbian and gay history and culture by collecting, preserving and providing access to material on all aspects of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender experience.

San Francisco Main Library, Latino/Hispanic Community Meeting Room, 100 Larkin St. (at Grove near Market), SF, [REDACTED]

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2003

Baudelaire bio

23 Jan 2003

The thread had begun on Baudelaire before someone slipped in an idler, second question — the kind Kevin could always answer better. Bruce Boone, cited within, was his old New Narrative comrade.

David, I don't know much about Baudelaire but I can shed some partial light on your other question, viz "How sexy is Michael McClure"? Bruce Boone told me once that Michael was the first straight man to wear leather pants in Berkeley—at least since Ishi, and that he, Michael, had imported this fashion from the leather boys of SF, but that he had had them made by his own tailor around 1959 or 1960 and of course, that Jim Morrison picked this up from McClure a bit later on a stage costume that would interrogate conventional audience notions of heterosexuality. I suppose because they, the pants, looked so supple, though they're notoriously insalubrious to wear. Is this what you wanted to know? xxx Kevin K.

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Cubism and literature

02 Feb 2003

The first of the year's wagers he meant to win by conscription: when Kevin had money riding on a question, three hundred poets became his research staff.

Do you think cubism influenced literature (or vice versa)? Help me win a bet.

What books or texts can you recommend that will show me in what ways cubism influenced literature? And also, what writers were influenced by cubism?

Please back channel all this information, because it is important that I win this bet.

I know as much as the average person about cubism and about literature, but I call upon you to help me on this one topic.

Thanks everyone.

— Kevin K.

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More questions

22 Mar 2003

Three unrelated errands bundled into one post; the middle one, chasing the pedigree of a common phrase, is exactly the sort of bet he liked to farm out to the whole room.

1, does anyone have the address for Amiri Baraka they can send me back channel, even an e-mail address would be fine.

2, does anyone know the origins of the term the "go to guy"? Does it come from sports or the military or what? Please point me in the right direction.

3, has anyone who's read "The Spinster and the Prophet" tell me if any follow up work has been done about this case or if there are any good reviews on this book?

Thanks everyone

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Enthusiastic

14 Apr 2003

House Organ was Kenneth Warren's long-running little magazine out of Lakewood, Ohio; William Sylvester, its subject here, was an all-but-unknown Buffalo poet. This is Kevin proselytizing, which he did as naturally as breathing.

Enthusiastic about the new issue of "House Organ" which came to me over the weekend and which I opened somewhat warily. But yeepee, wait till you read this issue, I can heartily recommend it. it's composed of just two poems, "Adamant" and "From Inform to Information," both of them by William Sylvester. While I was reading "Adamant" I had that strange feeling of the hair sticking up on the back of my neck that I associate wrongly or rightly with Emily Dickinson!!! Maybe she said it somewhere or something. Anyhow, if William Sylvester is on this list, congratulations on having written a really great poem. I don't know how you did it! Were you a soldier during World War II? If so, how old are you? If not, how did you make this material so convincing, and yet so all-encompassing, a funnel or

tunnel through which we see all of 20th century history actually reassemble and come alive, animated and so life-like? And what a time to write this poem, during US wartime once again, so everything rings so clearly and soundly across the thin air. Or did you write it a long time ago and the editor of "House Organ" has just printed it now? I don't pretend to be able to understand the Greek tags which are sprinkled throughout the second column of the poem, but I think I understand their function— but what is it, it's hard to paraphrase.

The rest of you might have seen this poem before, or perhaps you too get "House Organ" in the mail? If not, maybe you could write to the editor

House Organ c/o Kenneth Warren 1250 Belle Avenue Lakewood, Ohio 44107
and get a copy yourself.

Gee, this is the kind of thing I should write in a blog, but I don't have one, so I'll put in here in hopes that some of you will pick up on this really remarkable serial poem "Adamant." Thanks everyone—

Kevin K.

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Enough about Sylvester now more about me

15 Apr 2003

The subject line is honest. Argento Series was his sequence of elegies for the AIDS dead, then finding readers abroad; the Solanas online cult — devotees of the SCUM Manifesto author who shot Warhol — had lately adopted him too.

Hooray, my book Argento Series is the featured book on the website of the Dublin book store Anthology Books

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

Check it out, apparently my appeal has spread even to the land of Paul Muldoon, but maybe it's because I'm Irish too.

Also here's another website with a recent interview with me. It's called "Solanas Online," a website devoted to devotees of Valerie Solanas. You'll find their new issue quite illuminating and besides this interview with me there's a video clip of me riding a carousel all done through animation. Warning, don't try to open this site while you're at work, why, because a) it's very heavy with Flash and other special effects b) it opens up with a loud musical Blaxploitation-disco theme and c) the site is X rated and who knows who's monitoring your web usage while at work especially if you live in the US and the attorney general is trying to cut down on porn images, etc. You might jot down the website address and remember to try to dial it up while at a friend's house. PS, the editors also sent a reporter to the recent Acker conference at NYU and she has written it up in a jaundiced, spiteful,

irreverent way I sort of like, though I'm glad I wasn't among her "victims." Anyway, if you have your pen the URL is

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

That's all for me, for now.

— Thanks everyone — Kevin K.

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Re: help with Ashbery

01 May 2003

A thread nominally about Ashbery had turned into a parlor game — which modernist writers had reached a hundred? — and Kevin, characteristically, answers with a name from across the water. Edward Upward, Isherwood's schoolfriend and the slow Marxist novelist, was indeed still alive at a hundred.

Not an American, but the UK modernist Edward Upward is also still alive at age 100 and writing away. A month or so ago the Guardian had an interview with him . . .

<http://books.guardian.co.uk/departments/generalfiction/story/0,6000,925395,00.html>

Original Message: -----

The Marianne Moore review appears in the Complete Prose of Marianne Moore (NY: Penguin, 1987) 535-539. She briefly discusses Spicer, Kirby Doyle, Schuyler, Ferlinghetti, O'Hara, Charles Olson, Ed Dorn, — usually in a one-line comment. I found it mostly positive though I imagine one could say she is damning with faint praise. She has only one sentence on Ashbery, which appears on p. 538. "John Ashbery's 'Instruction Manual' also is a pleasure [she has just praised O'Hara], a documentary with structure and content."

She says that the new poetry has a hard task to compete with the new vocabularies of science, which she calls "enthraling," and her main criticism is that the article "The" should have been taken off the title of Allen's anthology, and the book called "New American Poetry," because it leaves out such interesting new poets [to her] as Daniel Hoffman, Robert Bagg, and George Starbuck.

At any rate, Marianne Moore wouldn't be able to complain much about obscurantism. She's as tough to read as any. Even in this she appears to be saying something in her last paragraphs about the squalor of writing about drug addiction and what actually calls "civic parasites" seems to be an indictment, but this seems to be a general comment, and she's too politic to attack anyone directly. But I've always appreciated her high praise of Corso (even though he was both a drug addict and what I suppose could be called a civic parasite, whatever she meant by that). She cites a quatrain, and says he has "vehemence," among other nice things. She especially seems to enjoy Charles Olson, though she tries to link his poetics to older formulations propounded by her great friend Kenneth Burke — who lived to be 95 or something.

Btw. Can anybody think of an important American modernist who attained the age of a 100 or more? There's Ernst Junger in Germany. Soupault got to be 92 among the French surrealists. Pierre Klossowski was 95. Moore was I think only 85 or so. Painters seem to last longer than writers. Balthus was in his nineties, as was Picasso. But very few seem to last past 100. Bob Hope and Irving Berlin, yes, but what about American poets? Who got to be oldest?

— Kirby

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Re: Stein in the NYer

30 May 2003

The New Yorker had lately run Janet Malcolm on Gertrude Stein and her scholars; Ulla Dydo, the greatest of those scholars, had let her in the door. Kevin, a connoisseur of horror films, had opinions about that.

Here I thought Ulla Dydo an eminently sensible person as well as a brilliant Stein scholar. But you have to have rocks in your head to invite Janet "The Punisher" Malcolm into your apartment. Hasn't she ever seen any Hammer films? Once you invite one over your threshold, you're mince meat!!!

— Kevin K.

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Between here and August the archive goes quiet — the list's usual midsummer lull, and Kevin with it. He comes back in the heat of the year talking, as he always did, and the season ends in an elegy.

Re: PRE-PUBLICATION OFFER on OPERA by BARRY SCHWABSKY

08 Aug 2003

Eileen Tabios's Meritage Press was offering the book at pre-publication; Barry Schwabsky, better known as an art critic for Artforum, had waited two decades to gather his poems. Kevin, an art writer himself, read it as a colleague.

It's great to see a book of poems by the critic Barry Schwabsky, whose art writing I've admired for so many years. I didn't expect it would be as good as it is—for how many art writers of the first rank really can write poetry? (How many human beings do any two things especially well?) But Schwabsky is an unexpected exception. The promo material describes him as a poet writing "outside" of poetry, and that gibes with the strangely foreign flavor of his work, which sometimes seems to have been translated from a more delicate language than English. On the other hand it's often colloquial, lived-in, the "vulgar tongue," the trailer park trash talk mixed in with the references to Wittgenstein and Valery

Larbaud and Traherne. One poem even boasts an epigraph by A.A. Fair, which I've never seen happen before in a book of poetry.

On the back jacket David Shapiro speaks of the compression of Schwabsky's writing, it's true, no poem goes on much longer than a page or two, and those that do are linked shorter lyrics. I don't know yet what "Opera" means, but I'm working on it.

One odd result of this unfamiliarity, by which I mean the alterity of his poetic diction, is that, although the book's subtitle is "Poems 1981-2002," I'm hard pressed to follow any pattern of growth, or decay, the way one might be able to with another author. The references to other poets—to Elaine Equi, Clark Coolidge, John Yau—might have been made at any time during that period, for they're none of them youngsters. Were the poems written in chronological order? I don't think so—but I'm just guessing because the opening sequence, "Opera" employs the now-familiar trope of the remix—there's a "Club Mix" of it, a "Bandwidth Mix" and so on, which wasn't so familiar back in 1981 was it? I don't think so, though now it's a yawny commonplace in poetry I suppose. Anyhow it'll all come clear the more I read of this book. Congratulations to you, Eileen Tabios, for having the gumption to publish such a unique and satisfying work. Hope that some of you on the Poetics List will buy it and tell me what you think.

— Kevin K.

At 1:24 AM -0400 8/8/03, Eileen Tabios wrote:

The notice below contains a "Pre-Publication Discount Offer" for Barry Schwabsky's book which will be officially released on November 1, 2003. But copies are physically on-hand ... on my hands so I'm...offering! Cheers, Eileen Tabios ===== AN-
NOUNCEMENT FROM MERITAGE PRESS (St. Helena & San Francisco, <A
HREF="<http://meritagepress.com/index.htm>">Meritage Press): OPERA: Poems
1981-2002 By Barry Schwabsky Contact: Eileen Tabios at [REDACTED] <A
HREF="<http://meritagepress.com/opera.htm>">OPERA: Poems 1981-2002, Barry
Schwabsky Meritage Press is pleased to announce the publication of OPERA,
the first book-length collection of poems by Barry Schwabsky. Written over a 21-year-
period, OPERA presents a compelling, often ecstatic, poetic body of work by a writer
who has been more visible over the past two decades as a respected art critic. Mr.
Schwabsky was first published as a college undergraduate in POETRY magazine;
subsequently, he published his work in various journals as well as in two chapbooks,
the last being Fate/Seen In The Dark in 1985 through the respected poetry publisher,
Burning Deck. Over the last decade, however, he has circulated his poems informally
or published them only as limited-edition poet-artist collaborations. OPERA now
allows Mr. Schwabsky's poetry to be accessible to the larger public. Reflecting his
primarily private poetic development, Mr. Schwabsky has created a poetry that
transcends the schools and categories that sprung up within the poetry world of
recent decades — also observed by various poet-critics offering advance words on
OPERA. David Shapiro says Mr. Schwabsky's poems are "born of a strange encounter

between American poetry and European masters such as Celan and Novalis [that] always surprises me by its exploratory investigations." John Yau says, "Imagine poems written by Sir Walter Raleigh after he has read Wittgenstein and Lorine Neidecker, listened to bands whose names weren't in the air and learned more about contemporary art than anyone thought possible, and you might get a sense of the compactness of these poems, an airy abstract density unlike anyone else's." Geoffrey O'Brien, meanwhile, says, "These might be choruses and arias from some lost Venetian music drama of the early 1600s transmuted over the intervening centuries of silence into a software program for a new species of lyrical electronica." Mr. Schwabsky is a well-known art critic for such publications as *Artforum* (where he is co-editor of international reviews), *Art in America*, *Tema Celeste*, and the *London Review of Books* and the author of *The Widening Circle: Consequences of Modernism in Contemporary Art* (Cambridge University Press) as well as co-author of *Jessica Stockholder* (Phaidon Press), *Gillian Wearing: Mass Observation* (Merrell Publishers), and *Vitamin P: New Perspectives in Painting* (Phaidon Press), among others. He also works as a curator and teacher, having taught at Pratt Institute, the School of Visual Arts, New York University, Yale University, and Goldsmiths College, University of London. Born in Paterson, New Jersey, he currently resides in London. Inevitably, Mr. Schwabsky's activities as an art critic has affected his poems as reflected in an elegant exactitude to his form: in his poems, each word earns its presence.

ORDERING INFORMATION: OPERA's ISBN No. is 0970917929 Price: \$14.00 Barry Schwabsky's OPERA will be available this Fall through Amazon.com; Meritage Press' web site (www.MeritagePress.com); and through Small Press Distribution (www.spdbooks.org). All three sites process internet sales; you also may request your favorite bookstore to order the book from SPD. Publisher's Special Offer Until October 15, 2003: Book orders placed directly with the publisher to U.S. locations will carry a 25% discount off of the retail price, and cancellation of the normally \$3 shipping & handling charge. Orders to non-U.S. locations will receive the same discount, but the relevant international shipping charges will be passed through to customers. Contact us first by e-mail for non-U.S. orders. For those placing U.S. orders, you may make checks out to Meritage Press (\$11.20 per book) and send to Eileen Tabios Publisher Meritage Press 2275 Broadway, Suite 312 San Francisco, CA 94115

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Re: ebbe borregaard

26 Aug 2003

Ebbe Borregaard belonged to the Spicer-Duncan circle of the 1950s and then, more or less, vanished into private life; the list was passing word of his whereabouts. Kevin had helped coax him back into a room once, at Small Press Traffic.

At 7:27 AM -0700 8/26/03, Joel Weishaus wrote:

I got word this morning that Ebbe Borregaard "has a cabinet making shop in Sonoma and is reported to be in good health." -Joel W.

I hate to be one of those people who can't be bothered to read all the way back to the beginning of the thread, but there it is. If there's someone who wants Borregaard's address he or she can back channel me and I'll pass it along to you. As

several have remembered, he gave his first reading in many years (30?) at Small Press Traffic a few years back when we were celebrating the re-release of the NEW AMERICAN POETRY anthology.

His legend was that he was the last "student" at Black Mountain College—running away from home as a teenager, he arrived at BMC on the very day they locked up the place and unable to believe this turn of events, he sat on the doorstep piteously and everyone felt sorry for him & taught him a few things before saying goodbye.

— Kevin K.

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Re: Discount on WHAT IS POETRY: CONVERSATIONS WITH THE AMERICAN AVANT-GARDE

27 Aug 2003

Daniel Kane's book gathered interviews with a dozen avant-garde poets; the offer came from the author, and Kazim Ali had already praised it. Kevin adds his voice from the amateur's seat he always claimed to occupy.

Let me second Kazim Ali's response to this fine book. I'm not a teacher, nor was I ever much of a student, but as a poetry "aficionado" I recommend it highly. Kane has a great skill at drawing out people, giving them space to say things they might never have thought of by themselves. Reading the book is like listening to some of one's favorite people talking, rather intimately, among themselves. Even those who've been interviewed 3000 times seem to appear newly washed and fresh all over again (Ashbery, Creeley, Koch among them). Indeed as I look at the book again I realize, oh my goodness, I've met all these people, and only rarely heard them speak to such point in person. In fact one of them I'd rather only read about in books than ever encounter again during our lifetimes but that's neither here nor there (except insofar as it's another tribute to D. Kane's interviewing skills). Don't let the title put you off. (Maybe it was designed to appeal to children or Jeopardy contestants?) He—Kane—is smart enough to know that nobody knows what poetry is.

— Kevin K.

Original Message: -----

AVANT-GARDE

Teachers & Writers Collaborative is happy to announce that members of the Buffalo Poetics and Writenet lists can order copies of my book What Is Poetry: Conversations with the American Avant-Garde, at a discount. Instead of paying \$17.95, you now can pay a simple \$15. All you have to do is call 1-888-BOOKS-TW, and let them know that you're taking advantage of the WRITENET-BUFFALO special offer.

WHAT IS POETRY contains a series of interviews with 12 poets (including John Ashbery, Fanny Howe, Robert Creeley, and Bernadette Mayer) about their work, accompanied by an introduction to the American "avant-garde tradition," a series of biographies, and an extensive bibliography of primary and secondary sources. I hope that the book will go over well not just with poetry "aficionados" but with teachers and students of modern American poetry looking for a way in to the work apart from the expected critical essays.

best, —daniel

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Re: Komunyakaa's Best of

28 Aug 2003

Yusef Komunyakaa, a Pulitzer winner, had edited that year's Best American Poetry and used his introduction to swing at experimental writing; a poster had flagged it. Kevin answers for the side under attack.

To my ear it seemed like a particular blast at Creeley (editor of last year's volume) — but maybe that is his way of clearing a space for himself to unpack his own poetics?

Note how "exploratory poetry" is seen to a) grow out of Black Mountain poetry and b) serve as a verbal equivalent of Rauschenberg's "erased DeKooning drawing," (ie the total destruction of something beautiful for the amusement of a few eggheads) (and further links to Al-Qaeda style terrorism) (eggheads as terrorists). All in the name of a more populist poetics, the kind Pulitzer Prize winners practice.

— Hi Rae xxx Kevin K.

Original Message: -----

I just happened upon the new Best Am Poetry of 2003, edited by Komunyakaa, and noticed that his introduction is a rather rabid blast at what he sometimes calls "exploratory" poetry. I mean, this is really striking - beyond what you might expect. Check it out and see what you think.

RA

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Re: SF Poet Lawrence Fixel dies

29 Aug 2003

Lawrence Fixel, a San Francisco prose-poet of the older generation, had died at eighty-six; David Kirschenbaum forwarded the Chronicle obituary. Kevin, who knew everyone, had known him too.

Thank you, David Kirschenbaum, for posting this.

I always thought Lawrence Fixel would be around forever.

He will be missed by many.

He was there when Spicer had his confrontation with Langston Hughes on a Marin houseboat . . . (Due to Hughes' troubles with HUAC etc, he was not allowed to speak on the campus at SF State after he had been invited there & so the organizers had to scramble for another venue for his reading). Fixel looked the same for 20 years, a kind of male Diana Vreeland (in looks) (very different writing style). Farewell to a great heart!

— Kevin K.

Original Message: -----

Hi all,

Hanging out in SF with the poet Kent Taylor, and he passed this information on to me about the death of Lawrence Fixel.

Here's the obit that ran in yesterday's SF Chronicle.

as ever, David

Lawrence Fixel — poet for more than 70 years

San Francisco poet Lawrence Fixel, whose quizzical and contemplative works often explored the paradoxes of life, has died.

Mr. Fixel, whose writing career spanned more than 70 years, died of natural causes early Sunday morning at his home. He was 86.

Although not so widely known as the Beat generation writers synonymous with San Francisco's literary history, Mr. Fixel was nevertheless an influential poet whose manuscripts, journals and letters appear alongside those of Lawrence Ferlinghetti and others at UC Berkeley's Bancroft Library.

"It reflects his status as a prose poet," said Bill Brown, a researcher at the library.

Mr. Fixel was perhaps best known for his prose poems, long-form works more akin to short stories, and for parables likened to those of Franz Kafka and Jorge Luis Borges.

"In quizzical, contemplative prose poems and parables, he presents characters in transit, and deftly illuminates the complex of enigmas and paradoxes inherent in their often simple journeys," Publishers Weekly said of Mr. Fixel's last book, "Truth, War and Dream-Game."

He drew inspiration from his experiences during some of the most formative events of the 20th century, from the Great Depression to World War II to the tumult of the 1960s.

"He did see a lot of the world, and he absorbed it all and distilled it all, " said Jack Marshall, a poet who had known Mr. Fixel since 1968. "If a person were to read his work for the first time and not know his life, they'd think he had very little experience with the outside world. But he did, and he distilled it all."

Mr. Fixel was born in Brooklyn and raised in White Plains, N.Y., where his father owned a sporting goods store. He began writing in high school after being encouraged by an English teacher who saw promise in his work.

Mr. Fixel was just 19 when he returned to New York during the Depression and found work with the Federal Writers Project, a part of the Works Progress Administration. Working alongside the likes of Richard White and Ralph Ellison,

Mr. Fixel earned \$18.75 a week writing about the architecture of New York's churches for a guidebook of the city.

After three years with the FWP, Mr. Fixel moved to Los Angeles, where he lived briefly and married his first wife before serving three years in the merchant marine during World War II. He sailed throughout the South Pacific before being sent to New York City to work aboard a ship carrying troops to Europe. He later served one year in the Army.

Mr. Fixel was divorced shortly after the war. He remarried in 1954.

He moved to San Francisco in 1950. He soon fell in with the writers of the day, including Langston Hughes, Dylan Thomas and, later, George Hitchcock, who published the literary magazine "Kayak."

Always a prolific writer, Mr. Fixel's first collection of poems, "The Scale of Silence," was published in 1970 when he was 53 years old. Four more books followed during the next 10 years. His most recent book, "Truth, War and the Dream-Game," was published in 1992.

Although best known for his prose poems, Mr. Fixel wrote beautiful verse poems, which friends and scholars called noteworthy for their lyrical writing and vivid imagery. They cited "Song for the Ending of the Year" as an example:

One by one the subjects disappear:

The gift of speech is going with the year,

In company with silence and with fear.

The package on the table waits to be untied.

The Child, the Tree are left inside the House —

No message from the crucified.

We ride the painted hobby-horse of day,

Or stand aside, or join the latest craze —

Next year's another box, another maze.

"It's so disillusioned, yet the language is calm and clear and lyrical," Mr. Marshall said. "It's disillusioning, but it's beautifully said. I find a dark joy in it."

The poem also highlights the economy of words for which Mr. Fixel was known.

"He had a propensity to condense his ideas and thoughts into the smallest possible space," Mr. Marshall said.

Mr. Fixel continued writing, giving readings and teaching at poetry workshops until just a couple of years ago.

He is survived by his wife of 49 years, Justine Fixel of San Francisco; his daughter, Kate Frankel of Irvine; his sister, Pearl Berkelman of San Francisco; and two grandchildren.

Plans for a memorial service are pending.

— David A. Kirschenbaum, editor and publisher Boog City 330 W.28th St., Suite 6H NY, NY 10001-4754 T: (212) 842-BOOG (2664) F: [REDACTED] www.boogcity.com
mail2web - Check your email from the web at <http://mail2web.com/>.

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OMG Eye Witness!! In San Francisco

03 Sep 2003

An eyewitness dispatch, the genre he was born for. David Hadbawnik, then a young Bay Area poet, had a musical at the SF Fringe Festival; what Kevin ran into on the walk home is best left to Kevin.

Hi everyone, OMG I went to see David Hadbawnik's play at the SF Fringe Festival tonight.

I had acted in this play (and sang and danced too) when he first presented it earlier this year (in a 15 minute version) at our Poets Theater Jamboree. I was curious to see how he would expand it into a 50 minute version. Well, he knocked it out of the park. Though he doesn't appear on stage himself, he wrote a dozen songs and a strange, twisty book that reveals what happens when a superstar shortstop on a major league ball team decides to come out of the closet. The songs are much stronger, real Broadway Richard Adler-style numbers, rousing and catchy, and some of the singers are awesome, especially the poet Stephen Berry who plays the lead and you could eat him like ice cream. A vendor comes and throws bags of peanuts and popcorn out into the crowd. I sat with David Kirschenbaum who's here visiting from NYC and he says the baseball parts are accurate and he should know. Also saw Diane di Prima, sitting in the front row and hollering for "Author, author!" Well, don't miss the show which plays again on Sat and Sun this weekend at 8:30, and at 10 pm on Saturday the 13th. Details at sffringe.org, it's a great way to pass an idle hour. Then I walked down Taylor from Eddy towards Market, what a skeezy neighborhood, and I see these big tour

buses parked outside the Warfield, a bunch of flashbulbs going off, a small knot of people, and as I'm ambling along I see the center of attention is Johnny Rotten, still looking much the same. He's all loose and signing autographs, albums, posing with fans, just about a dozen of us. I didn't have my autograph book and didn't bring my camera, I'm like, nuts. Paul Cook and Glen Matlock were there too, but I didn't care about them. Johnny Rotten, I should say John Lydon, signed a woman's breast with a big black Magic Marker.

Then it was just the two of us. I asked him what he thought of Kylie Minogue.

"Let me shake your hand," he said. "You're the first man in the USA to ask me what I think of that witch." Only he didn't say "witch."

I stuck out my hand. "You changed my life."

We looked each other up and down while we shook. "Not enough," he said. "Not nearly enough."

— Kevin K.

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Re: query

11 Sep 2003

Mark Weiss wanted a solid biographical account of John Wieners — the Boston poet of The Hotel Wentley Poems, whose life had gathered fully as much legend as fact. Kevin was the man to sort the one from the other.

Hi Mark. There's a brief but accurate bio online attached to the Finding Aid for the John Wieners papers at the Special Collections Department of University of Delaware Library which, incidentally, I'd love to go to since apparently they have what looks like oodles of unpublished Wieners material (I take it that they were acquired from the novelist Irving Rosenthal, with whom Wieners was very close in NYC in the early 60s).

My review of "707 Scott Street" is on line too though it is marred by one factual error, and when Wieners died it was reprinted a few times.

Dodie's story that David Bromige is remembering is called "Not Clinical but Probable" and appeared in City Lights Journal #4. It's not a memoir of John Wieners per se but a reconstruction of her association with *another* schizophrenic poet in the 1970s here in San Francisco. Because it's dedicated to Wieners, I think that's where the legend grew up about her having an affair with JW but she never (sigh) did.

Tom Clark's book on Charles Olson, which contains the story of Wieners and his patroness Panna Grady, came out about the same time, and because for legal

reasons Grady's name could not then be used, and she appears under a pseudonym, I know for a fact that some have conflated Panna Grady with Dodie, so ridiculous on the face of it and yet that's how legends are born. By the way I thought Clark's take on Wieners is a very good one and I always recommend his book though I know many don't like it.

Strange but on Sunday a young fellow called here from Lowell Massachusetts apparently he plans to make a video biography of John Wieners and he has been in touch with lots of people starting with Raymond Foye, Gerrit Lansing, Charley Shively and he's on to Creeley next.

Hope this helps Mark.

xxx Kevin K.

Seriously. A fan in foreign parts asked me. I could probably reconstruct a bare outline, which wouldn't include that affair, but for my friend something a bit more thorough would be useful. If it doesn't exist that's also interesting. Mark At 11:06 PM 9/10/2003 -0700, you wrote: an excellent faux-bio exists in a story by Dodie Bellamy, which alleges an affair between Dosie and John. I read it in complete belief. zbut where among these books is it? David Bromige -----Original Message-----From: Mark Weiss [REDACTED] To: [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Date: Wednesday, September 10, 2003 12:38 PM Subject: query Does anybody know of a good bio article or more on John Wieners? Mark PS I hate to use up my second posting of the day to a request, but I could use the info. 2 a day does seem a tight rein. Backchannel would be fine to answer this.

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What people are reading & Carla Harryman's play

25 Sep 2003

Carla Harryman, a Language poet with a long career in performance, had a play running in the Bay Area, and the list's perennial what-are-you-reading thread was going alongside it. Kevin, a Poets Theater veteran, files from the house.

I always like the threads about what people are reading. Thanks for continuing it and turning me on to so many books I didn't even know about.

As for Carla Harryman's play, Kasey Mohammad and Travis Ortiz have both weighed in about it, I will too. There's a lot to admire about this play, and I urge everyone to see it, not that we in the Bay Area haven't been hectored enough about going to see it, it's worth it and how! And, it's the last weekend to get the chance.

The main four actors, who I take it play the parts of three characters, or objects (in Harryman's text for three voices it is up to the director of each production to choose how many actors should play them), have been rehearsed to razor sharp exactitude by Jim Cave. These actors, who have professional resumes and

everything, stand in even sharper contrast to a raggle-taggle group of poets who get to speak the chorus parts. The energies of the two kind of "acting" are completely disparate and bump into each other in all sorts of fascinating ways.

The play is what I think of as "fluidly" staged, with a maximum of running around and striking attitudes that serve to underline Harryman's words. Occasionally, as a sentence ends, the actors freeze and the lights change in some portentous way, according to the conventions of the cinema. Then the objects start moving again and we are in for a sea change between naturalism and a heavily-weighted symbolism. I had the feeling that the actors were a bit at sea trying to maintain the "thread" of the "characterization," and sometimes wound up popping out their eyes keeping up with all the language that they were called on to present "theatrically." By the way, via the difficult indeed daring method of addressing the agonistics of race and class in America, Harryman has I think produced what must be her best text—open, warm, strikingly autobiographical, reflective and certainly generative; I'm looking forward to its publication.

People in the Bay Area can go tonight, or Friday or Saturday, but on Friday you should go to see Yedda Morrison at Small Press Traffic. She is a brilliant poet whose first book "CROP" has just come out from Kelsey St. Press. The actors of Carla's play will be playing just as brilliantly on Saturday. Yedda will only be reading just the one night, and also she will be joined by another of my favorites, Kim Rosenfield all the way from NYC. I'm sure Yedda is nervous as beyond preparing for this reading she is about to take on another great theatrical challenge, playing epochal body artist Kiki Smith in my new play "The Smith Family" due in November.

That's enough from me for now.

Kevin K.

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Re: i am not a nut; elect me!

14 Oct 2003

Maria Damon — poet, critic, and one of the list's steadiest presences — was running for an MLA post and had asked for votes. Kevin, ineligible, offers the only campaign counsel he had to give.

Do you have any damaging information to leak about the other candidate? How are we supposed to make up our minds without same. Who is the other candidate anyhow? Please, more disclosure on all counts, Maria.

Thank you.

I'm not eligible to vote, but let those who are open the floodgates of freedom.

— Kevin K.

Original Message:

At 10:25 AM 10/14/2003 -0500, Maria Damon wrote:

hi all; if you are MLA members who just got your ballots for 2004 you may notice that i am one of 2 candidates for MLA the poetry division. i wanna do this, so if you can w/ clear conscience vote for me and feel moved to do so, i'd be v happy. xo, md —

-----mail2web - Check your email from the web at <http://mail2web.com/> .

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Re: Kevin's Play Is Where?

15 Oct 2003

Someone had asked, in mock-desperation, where and when the play actually was; Kevin supplies the answer and, unable to stop there, the whole backstory. The Big Keep was a Poets Theater benefit for three endangered poetry audio archives.

Will the real Kevin Killian please stand up and say where his play is and at what time. All I know is it's this Saturday, in San Francisco. Thank you Kevin from David L

And he is not I repeat not a studio plant! Here are all the details of this San Francisco performance:

Poets Theater

Saturday October 18, 7:30 pm @ Unitarian Center, \$10 donation 1187 Franklin Street (at Geary)

an evening to benefit Naropa Audio Archive Project and The Poetry Center's American Poetry Archives

The Big Keep, new play by Kevin Killian, featuring Anne Waldman (as Lauren Bacall), Kota Ezawa (as Lars von Trier), Jocelyn Saidenberg (as Jorie Graham), Wayne Smith (as St. John of the Cross), Rex Ray (as Kevin Killian), Cecilia Dougherty (as Frieda Hughes), Mary Kite, Karla Milosevich, Will Yackulic, Steve Dickison, Tanya Hollis, Zakary Syzmanski; incidental music by Steven Taylor.

In an alternate universe, funding rains down upon the Poetry Center, St. Mark's Poetry Project, and the Audio Archives at Naropa University. Poetry Center Director Steve Dickison's got so much money he pays poets fabulous sums and lights his cigars with \$500 bills in his Learjet. The Poetry Center's a gilded showplace, and thousands stand on line to see and hear its legendary backlist of video and audiotapes. But when Steve fires his celebrity spokeswoman, Jorie Graham, and her spiritual confessor St. John of the Cross, replacing them with his latest enthusiasm, fabled screen star Lauren Bacall, all hell breaks loose.

Anne Waldman stars as Lauren Bacall, pursued by her Danish 'Dogme 95' director Lars von Trier (Kota Ezawa).

"The Big Keep" is fantasy, melodrama, sci-fi, and poets' theater all rolled up in one big ball of agitprop, designed to help support the fight for preservation of endangered tape materials of readings from the past 50 years at three great organizations. And Steve Dickison plays himself.

Kevin Killian lives in San Francisco and, with Dodie Bellamy, has edited over 100 issues of the writing/art zine they call *Mirage #4/Period[ical]*. He is a poet, playwright, novelist, art writer, and biographer; his books include *Shy*, *Arctic Summer*, *Bedrooms Have Windows*, *Little Men*, and *Argento Series*.

The play all started about a year or so ago when Mary Kite on behalf of the Audio Archives Project at Naropa asked me to write a play that would raise public consciousness about the necessity for preservation of poetry readings that are now fading away on audiotape and videotape. I said, "Sure, why not?" Then she said that Anne would be in it and that Anne would like to play Lauren Bacall. "That's a great idea," I said. "And Steven Taylor will come and play music on stage." "The more the merrier," I said, hanging up, without an idea in my head about how to make this all come together. Flash forward to a year or so later, and I'm just finishing up the play now, so come on Saturday and see what happens! NB, the play was designed so that Anne could stage it very simply in whatever city she happened to be in, with a pick up cast of poets, artists, filmmakers, musicians, as we do here in SF. But now I'm afraid the play is "too San Francisco" and that audiences elsewhere won't get it.

You tell me! But if you like poetry you'll like this.

— Kevin K. 2003

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He, Don Juan, a Translation

04 Nov 2003

Another book he wanted the list to buy: John Sakkis was then an MFA student at San Francisco State, and this was his first, from a small local press. Kevin recommends it the way he recommended everything he loved — as though the reader would be foolish to hesitate.

Can I recommend yet another book of new poetry? John Sakkis is a student at the MFA Writing Program at SF State, and they must be teaching them something right over there. Sakkis (whose name I think is pronounced with an accent on the last syllable, like Weldon Kees) has written a book called "He, Don Juan, a Translation," which didnt sound too promising at first light but which I have reread several times over the last few weeks, liking it more each time. "He Don

Juan" is a translation in a peculiar sense, it re-makes the highly colored anthropology of Carlos Castaneda into a serial poem in the Spicer tradition. At first it seems coincidence that Castaneda and Spicer were working out of Berkeley at the same time, but as Sakkis sees it isn't a coincidence exactly, more a form of magic. The poems are dated with dates that remind me of the dates of composition of several of Spicer's major works, from *The Holy Grail* through *Language*, and each is "spoken" by the naif little pleasure-loving chump who, hypnotized by the sorcerer Don Juan, becomes more and more like him in every way, until their languages become interpenetrable and their existences rise into question like so much marijuana smoke. There are some attractive drawings by another local, SF artist Matthew Arnone. It's a book about apprenticing oneself to a master and the risks that entails, risks emotional, physical, financial romantic, pronomial. "We were in the morning. I felt I was speaking 'I don't know,' then was saying 'I don't want it now,' he, don Juan didn't speak. This is when I knew he was going to evade it, that question, so I was waiting for him to mention it." There's a lot going on in this work and I need the help of a whole team of field researchers to help me decipher it. Ha ha, whatever it is that John Sakkis is on, I want some of it. People who are interested in this book can send 5 dollars to the publisher, Beets & Gasoline Press, 947 Geary Street #5, San Francisco, CA, 94109. Tell them KEVIN KILLIAN sent you.

-----mail2web - Check your email from the web at <http://mail2web.com/> .

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Re: is there a problem using the word hermaphrodite in a poem?

17 Nov 2003

A poster writing from a blog called transdada asked whether a certain word was permissible in a poem; Kevin, congenitally against barring any word from the vocabulary, obliges — and then digresses.

Dear Kari, I don't know if there's a problem using the word "hermaphrodite" in a poem—I hate to think of barring any word from the poetic vocabulary entirely, though I don't know. Let's work on a case by case basis.

By the way, what do you make of Kasey Mohammad's blurb for Rodney Koenek's excellent new book "Rouge State" from Pavement Saw? "This is how Naked Lunch might have turned out if it had been written by Robert Browning having a sex-change operation"? That kind of got me feeling kind of weird. Does the natural (or forced) exuberance of blurbs preclude sensitivity to transgender issues? But it's hard to think straight about blurbs, the most thankless and useless form of writing in the world.

— Kevin K.

Original Message: -----

is there a problem using the word "hermaphrodite" in a poem?

<http://transdada.blogspot.com/>

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2004

Re: 2nd to last post!

23 Mar 2004

Kirby Olson was the list's most dependable provocateur, and here he had been baiting the room about the Beats and Morocco. Kevin, who almost never lost his temper in public, made an exception.

Was there a vote or something, and I missed it? Why is this man still allowed to post on this list?

Was there a forum in which people stood up and said, "Let Kirby Olson post"?

If so could we re-stage it? I didn't get my two cents in earlier.

Shame on you, Kirby Olson, for befouling the Poetics List with your so-called facts and charges. I agree that "life and news must trickle into even the most remote ivory tower," but who elected you Walter Cronkite? Don't try to tell any of us what is or isn't a "gay issue." You've given me one more thing to do on a daily basis, i.e., to try to remember all Lutherans can't be like you.

—Kevin Killian

Original Message: -----

This post will be 75% poetry (not mine) straight from Ginsberg's Howl. It is to answer the charges that Morocco was not a pederasty center for the Beats. I could also thump down Naked Lunch as evidence.

"Rocky Mount to tender Buddha or Tangiers to boys"

"committing no crime but their own wild cooking pederasty"

The next part could be upsetting so sensitive souls should gird themselves up with laughter before reading it, or just stop here:

The self-study by the American Catholic church has reached a figure that 85% of the indictments concerning statutory rape in the church have to do with victims between the ages of 12 and 18. This has been reported in the Catholic journal First Things, and also on EWTN, the Catholic news station. This isn't so much a pedophile thing (the boundaries are very unclear) as a gay issue, therefore, is the way it's being treated.

Someone else was trying to ask about that line. I realize nobody reads outside of their area as people who think differently often do drive us crazy, and I am sorry to upset people, but somehow life and news must trickle into even the most remote ivory tower.

def. of pederast: one that commits anal intercourse esp. with a boy (Webster's)

What are the boundaries of boy and man and child, age-wise, in terms of legality?

I'm sorry again to upset those who don't like to deal with Ginsberg's poetry in all its factuality or to think about the fullness of the legacy he's left. The reason that Burroughs was in Tangiers is that there was the possibility of screwing boys legally. This did not exist in America at the time.

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Re: queries:

16 Jun 2004

The list often served Kevin as a reference desk, and here a member had come looking for two half-remembered lines and their sources. He knew where to send her.

Dear Maria, I don't know about the M C Richards quote, but I think the Duncan one is from the NEW AMERICAN POETRY poetics section at the back, Duncan bragging about how he writes poetry "the way other men make love," to exercise his faculties at large. Check it out.

XXX Kevin K.

Original Message: -----

hi all i need help w the following

where does Duncan refer to "exercising his faculties at large"? where did M C Richards say "poets are not the only poets"? —

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What I Saw at the Orono Conference 2004, part 1

29 Jul 2004

Every summer the National Poetry Foundation convened its scholars at Orono, Maine, under Burton Hatlen; this year's subject was the poetry of the 1940s. Kevin went up alone — Dodie was teaching in Los Angeles, and he had been gravely ill the year before — and filed the longest and happiest report of his listserv life, in eight installments. Here is the first.

What I Saw at the Orono Conference 2004

Tuesday, June 22, 2004

I hadn't been to the University of Maine before without Dodie by my side, so when I was alone, I began jotting down my impressions, so I could tell her individual

things which, I hoped, would eventually cohere into narrative action. At Bangor International Airport I was surprised to see tall, stately Burton Hatlen, the director of the Conference. It must have been eleven-thirty at night, but there he was picking up conference attendees in person. And if you've been to Bangor Airport, you can see everyone who's in it all at the same time, like one of Hitchcock's British thrillers. Among my fellow visitors was Peter Middleton, remarkably alert and mellow for someone who'd been held up by Homeland Security for several hours at Philadelphia, and also I met Cristanne Miller, who was to be one of the plenary speakers in the days to come. I knew she was to speak on Marianne Moore, and I confessed I didn't know much about Moore, who always daunted me, even when she was alive, I never felt comfortable around her. Those stories about Marilyn Monroe being drawn to Marianne Moore (at NYC cocktail parties in the 1950s when Monroe was married to "intellectual" Arthur Miller)-why, I never credited them at all, they went contrary to everything I knew about Marilyn, which is plenty. But this I did not mention to Miller, who for all I know might actually be related to Arthur Miller and thus ultra-sensitive.

I rented a car, inched my way through pouring rain ten miles or so to Orono, where I found the University Motor Inn and its "Academic Suites." It's a place I had stayed at before, where I know the ropes. Since I last visited The Motor Inn has come under new management, and boasts of a major renovation, but the only thing different I actually could see with my own eyes is that a monitor sits up in the lobby where you can check your e-mail for four dollars. An old homey feeling enveloped me. Though it was late at night, and the rain was bucketing down, I tiptoed to the basement level to see if their nightclub was open. I was curious to see if the upgrade had altered the magnificent tackiness of the "Staar Club." Here's a link so you can see where all the high life takes place in Orono:

<http://www.universitymotorinn.com/STAAR.html>

This site has a few good pictures, but you can't tell that the pictures on the walls are all of stars, or "staars" with that extra "A," moody, dark charcoal studies of many beloved icons, Madonna, Harrison Ford, Keith Richard, etc. My current favorites among these pictures are the ones of Diana Spencer and Nicholas Cage. Perhaps they all have a Maine connection; as I found out this week, most people do. There's one photo of Elvis as a bartender, James Dean as a patron, slumped and miserable, elbows on the bar, and Marilyn in her Seven Year Itch dress is the barmaid. No drawings of poets except for one of Jim Morrison, the Lizard King. I was in the Staar Club last year when American soldiers toppled that statue of Saddam and I saw it on the big TV in the corner. I tried calling Dodie on my brand new cell phone. She was in LA teaching. I told her I remembered being in the very same suite with her, the previous April, during the beginning of the Iraq

War, how long ago it seemed. Dodie told me to try to write down what everyone was wearing, that it would help bring some helpful detail for my report.

Our connection was oddly clear, it was almost as if we were in the same room, maybe hotel rooms have strange resemblances to each other and two cells move in the same orbit, as in the case of the parameciums. Then I took out the printout of the program and tried to check off the panels I intended to see. There were so many interesting speakers coming, I ticked off the names of Harryette Mullen, Lorenzo Thomas, Liz Willis, Eleni Sikelianos, and on and on, and little did I know that none of them would actually be coming! (Illness and or over-commitment or the sheer fear factor of Maine being so far away from anything else prevented their appearance.) It was one of those perfect illustrations of the principle that the journey, not the arrival, matters, and that what we dare to look forward to will always be snatched away from us. Thirsty, I padded down to the one vending machine that sells Coke and other sodas, everything was sold out. It was a grim lesson, swallowing down my pills "with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs" as it says in Exodus 12:8. But, it was part of the weird sensation of having traveled by myself for the first time in many years. Dodie would never have let me be put in this thirsty position.

The cell phone has a picture of Catherine Zeta-Jones inside of it, so every time I turn it on, I see her. People mock "Zeta," saying she cheapens herself doing ads for T-Mobile. I don't see it like that. I bet Mercury had a bad reputation back in the day, flitting around sending messages. I like her. I touched her brightly colored face framed in its postage-stamp square of light. "Good night." Then I realized I had brought a lot of things with me but I'd forgotten the talk I was supposed to give Saturday morning.

Wednesday, June 23, 2004

I got up early in the morning to swim. See, I brought my trunks but forgot that %#@%&! paper. Warm enough morning but the water in the pool, so cold.

Then I tried finding my way to the University, finally piling into an "Alumni Center" which had a big sign outside of it, labeled, "Directions." I barreled my way into the office of a young woman whose posture was so clearly that of, oh no, not another person wanting directions! You could tell someone had put that sign outside against her wishes and went away leaving her to cope with the loons. But dealing with me she was patience personified. I said I was here in Bangor to attend on a conference on "American Poetry of the 1940s." She went to the phone and called someone who had a complete list of conferences being held on campus at that very moment. I had no idea! There must have been another 4 or 5. The Alumni Building I was in, biding my time, until she got off the phone, stands at the

very opposite end of the campus from where I was supposed to be registering—picture the campus as resembling a map of the UK and I was in Cornwall and I should have been in the Hebrides. The look on her face as she tried to outline the un-named campus roads I would have to traverse to get there was priceless. Alumni kept coming in to ask her sensible questions. She told me that, by hook or by crook, I had to get to "Doris Twitchell Allen Village." Luckily I have a fair enough sense of direction and just kept plowing through north by northeast. Doris Twitchell Allen, whose bas-relief profile kept appearing to me as if in some kind of prophetic dream, was Maine's greatest child psychologist and had a look on her as though she were a tremendously butch version of 30s star Fay Bainter (*White Banners*, *Jezebel*, etc), as though Fay Bainter had retired from the screen and taken up medicine and carpentry simultaneously. The haunting thing is that she lived until age 100, as though to say, I am determined to live through my century.

Finally I found the registration desk and got in line. When I got up to the front of the line, I asked for my name, and the girl asked, "Are you Sean Killian?" "No way," I said, haughtily, having been confused with this younger poet for so many years it stopped hurting eventually and just sort of-scabbed over. "I am Kevin Killian." "Well you're not registered."

It took a minute of shock for me to realize I was in the wrong line and this was for people who were staying in the college dorm. "Oh, sorry." "Are you from New York?" she asked, as if the snippy hail from New York only. "Originally," I replied. "Figures."

Because I had been so ill last year, Steve Evans and Jennifer Moxley, who live in Orono and teach at the University, had invited me to stay there with them in their old house on Main Street. Never was any human being treated so well, and never has anybody been so catered to. "Would you mind if Jackson Mac Low and Anne Tardos came by for a bit? They won't want to tire you." I had all these delicious questions to answer! From any point of view it was just wonderful and indeed, I'm the luckiest guy in the whole USA in this one respect. At lunch I met again with Peter Middleton, a charming Englishman about my age with a bug about science. We talked about the UK science fiction writer Olaf Stapleton. Middleton's paper is going to be about T S Eliot and Stapleton's influence on him. How bizarre, since all week I was thinking about science fiction, perhaps because of its continued invention in the 1940s, then a despised genre. Stephen Burt tells me that John Berryman wrote science fiction. Or was it Randall Jarrell? It was one of those people I'm always surprised to hear really intrigue others. Berryman or Jarrell, whoever it was, thought he could write science fiction like the big boys.

I remember Peter Middleton, I think, from the Robin Blaser conference in 1995 or so, for Blaser's 70th birthday. And also from being here in Maine four years back. In Vancouver I was startled that someone would come from so far away to address a conference on Blaser's life and times. He (Peter M.) has an unusual relationship with the USA having been brought up here in Maryland or someplace; his father was a diplomat and he got sent to some third rate private school for diplomatic kids and other types of young fuck-up. The way he told us the story at lunch made it sound fascinating. His face is so fresh I come to with a start when, piecing together the chronology, I figure Peter must be at least a year or two older than I am. At this kind of event, usually, there are a ring of people who are thirty years older than me, and another bunch who are twenty years younger. Then there's me. But now (I brighten up) there is also Peter Middleton and me being very mid century.

Lyn Hejinian and Bob Perelman, also nearly my age, came by straight from the Staar Club (or at any rate the University Motor Inn). It had been some time since I had seen Perelman, whereas Lyn and I had bumped into each other as recently as three weeks ago, just on the street. I couldn't remember the last time I had seen the two of them together, and yet this was to occur again and again over the next several days. We ate some delicious roast lamb and mint jelly while gossiping. In the background played a really good CD, Doris Day's "Duets" album with Andre Previn, from 1961, with its wonderful version of Johnny Mercer's "Fools Rush In" and the Rodgers & Hart "Wait til you see him,"

Wait till you see him See how he looks Wait till you hear him laugh.

Painters of paintings Writers of books Never could tell the half.

Doris Day has a rich velvety voice, a little husky, but precise, you could understand her on the moon. Watching *Curb Your Enthusiasm* I always think that the actress who plays Larry David's wife, Cheryl, is trying to channel Doris Day. There's a Maine connection, too, for if you've ever seen the direst of all Doris Day movies, *It Happened to Jane* with Jack Lemmon, he's an attorney and she's a, I don't even know what to call it, a Maine lobsterwidow with grit and two kids. She sings "Be Prepared," in it, to her little boy. Ugh.

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What I Saw at the Orono Conference, part 2

29 Jul 2004

The second installment. The company that will preside all week — Creeley, Hejinian, Perelman, Jackson Mac Low — is gathering.

We drove up to the campus a little early. The program, so handsomely designed, with its Ansel Adams style picture of tempestuous Maine rocks and water, was

still nevertheless a little cryptic about what the "welcome" would entail. In years past, this meant a lavish cocktail party or picnic set-up that would be like the first act in a Dodie Smith play-dozens of characters arriving all at once and only the merest of clues about how this "family" inter-related. This year we were directed to go to the "Hudson Museum" on campus-the Hudson, I took it, was a anthropological museum of skulls and totem poles, it was like that movie where the relics start leaking grease on themselves and the mummies returned to life. However the building was locked and bolted. The mummies inside sliding in the bolts to further evade suspicion. "Oh well," someone said, "they're not having drinks this year." (This was hardly the case as I was to find out.)

I saw Miriam Nichols on the pavement outside the Museum, totally fetching, her hair streaked and softened, with tendrils of saffron, and long. She wore an award-winning outfit of black crepe with gold piping sewn into it, like a pantsuit, except more elaborated. It was the kind of thing you'd accept an Oscar in, and I began to feel like I wasn't dressed up enough. I took out my camera, plunged right in. I remember meeting Miriam Nichols way back when, but how is it she is younger now than she was back then? As far as I can make out, we met at Ernie Edwards' party in his old San Francisco apartment, after the Jack Spicer/White Rabbit Conference of 1986. That was back in the day all right. Joe Dunn was there, that's how long ago it was. Duncan was there. All these fabulous individuals from out of poetic history, and Miriam had come down from B.C. where she was then still writing her dissertation on Robin Blaser's work? Or maybe that was complete already. In any case now that I think of it I've known her and admired her for the best part of 20 years. I remember one time she came to San Francisco and she wanted to see the buffalo that graze in Golden Gate Park. When we got there, it was like looking at an illustration of buffalo, they barely move, we watched them breathless for twenty minutes before one of them turned a hair. It was awfully dull, and yet hilarious. I give Kevin Costner full credit for being able to persuade thousands of buffalo to gallop at killer speed in *Dances with Wolves*.

Robert Creeley padded by on his little feet, like a cat. I can't figure out how he keeps it all together. For one so distinguished he is eminently approachable and even the young people who held him in such awe found themselves drawn into asking him bright questions about, what was Charles Olson really like. We all went in to sit down in an auditorium that adjoined the darkened museum and that's when it began to dawn on me how many familiar (and unfamiliar) faces had joined us. Everywhere I turned it was "Hi!" "Hi!" "Hi!" Why, they could have called off the entire program and I'd still be talking, but happily Burt Hatlen convoked the opening of the conference by briefly paying tribute to the many

artists who had died within the last year or so-Bern Porter, Jess, Cid Corman, Hugh Kenner, many more. Then Creeley took the stage and he reminisced about some of the "dear" ones. I like the way he says that such and such is "Dear Bill" or whoever. Makes me feel Irish down to my bones. He had in his hands some mint copies of old 40s-era "little magazines" which he said had just been shown to him by Orono's own David Adams, Chronos and The Golden Goose, and he read from his poems in them. It was a strange moment. The magazines were so mint they gleamed from the stage, as if brand new, but Bob C. was not looking that new, but still incredibly learned and energetic and when he launched into his talk about who had influenced him-which poets was he reading as a young man in the 1940s-he brought out some of his original textbooks and other poetry books-and anthologies of the period-Selden Rodman, Louis Untermeyer kind of things-and read little snippets of Hart Crane, Williams, Stevens, and so forth and it was all very moving.

Then came the tribute to Louis Zukofsky, who was born 100 years ago. They had rounded up a big crew for this one. Creeley stayed on stage, joined by Ted Enslin, Mark Scroggins, Lyn Hejinian, Bob Perelman and Barrett Watten, the latter three had of course participated in a staged "Poets Theater" style reading of "A" part 24, for which Perelman learned to play the harpsichord! Like the Addams Family! You can see a tape of this event by enquiring at the SF State Poetry Center. Later in the week there was some debate regarding the placement of these poets on this program, and the way that contemporary scholarship has promoted them into the rank of co-creators with Zukofsky by virtue of this "A"-24 performance. Each of the three spoke somewhat modestly of this achievement. Lyn Hejinian chose to read excerpts of the poetry of the many other Language Poets who couldn't be there on this occasion, for these were the people with whom she had learned to read Zukofsky, and this gesture was, I think, largely misunderstood by some in the audience, who grumbled that she'd lost the plot, whereas Barrett Watten's speech was actually very demure and yet rousing and dynamic, the highlight of the evening for me. But indeed the whole LZ tribute couldn't help but seem understaffed when one looked at the flyers people passed out for the upcoming Columbia/Barnard Zukofsky tribute planned for September 2004, which looked like it will have hundreds of people on stage like the massed choruses of Messiaen's Francis of Assisi.

Then there was another special program, a dramatic reading from "POWERS: TRACK, VOLUME III (for Armand Schwerner)." This was one of those events I wish there was more description of what it was, for despite the presence of Norman Finkelstein, I couldn't make out what was Powers, what was Track, and also, I thought, wasn't Armand Schwerner dead? So I skipped it! I remember

Dodie and I meeting him in Orono some years ago, and then Dodie got a little billet-doux from him in the mail, it was the first correspondence, she said, that she had ever been sent from Staten Island, which she didn't realize was part of NY, and it was from Schwerner, and then when she answered it, it came back, because he had died, which also had never happened to her either. All in all it was rather Jamesian and I'm sorry I missed this event, but I had to run over to the Doris Twitchell Allen building and set up the poetry reading, for which I had volunteered to be the MC. We had some great readers on board but two of them listed on the program in the end didn't read. Kathleen Johnson couldn't make it to Maine, and Barbara Cole, who could and did make it to Maine, well, she, whom I had last seen reading her work at one of those "Poets of the MLA" affairs in San Diego a few months ago, was in understandable distress, as her luggage was lost at the airport. I wonder how often people lose their luggage never to see it again ever, or is it always brought in on a succeeding flight. This happened to me one time, but so seldom I never expect my luggage to be lost and often pack my medicine, etc., in the luggage to be stowed and only now, with Barbara Cole's tragedy, am I rethinking my habitual non-thinking posture. Well, it wasn't a tragedy in Aristotle's scheme of things, but for the easily upset, this ranks as tragic, for she had among her luggage the very poems she was to read at the reading this evening. I handed her the keys to my rented car and told her to go back to Bangor and see if the following flight would deliver the luggage. I didn't even think about how uncomfortable it would be in the dorms of Orono if you didn't even have a washcloth or anything and had to lie down in your traveling clothes.

But even without Kathy Johnson or Barbara Cole, we still had a great reading, with only one faux pas, my own, I thought that Jayne Marek was giving her very first reading but I should have known by the expert way she read that she was a veteran old hand at this game. Oh what an idiot I am! Peter O'Leary read very beautifully, and Greg Biglieri was, to me, a great revelation, his poetry having changed so much since he lived here in the Bay Area in the fuzzy shadow of the Golden Gate, and having becoming sharp as icicles in a James Bond film from living in snowbound Buffalo. Mark Scroggins gave a rousing, dynamic presentation, filled with dry wit and an erudite approach to the syllable, even the pronoun. "Hooray for Bilbo Scroggins!" cried one scholar (Michael Magee?) And Peter Middleton read as well. I didn't get it, here it was creeping towards midnight, and O'Leary, Scroggins and Biglieri all had to get up at dawn and deliver papers at 8:30 a.m.-Maine time, whatever that is, and yet they were all carrying on in the high spirits that would foretell a sleepless night if they were all still babies. I read my poem "American Idol" and then handed over the mike to Bill Howe, who was in charge of the open reading series, which lasted every night

until we left. The highlight was Mairead Byrne reading a "Traditional Irish Poem," which rambled on and on intentionally as a kind of pastiche of comments you'd hear when a poet is trying to wind into a poem, part of it goes like this:

"And all the great sessions around Dublin and Dundalk that are recorded on the old 78s I remember the excitement when a new batch of them would be brought home and fair play to all the men and women who collected them. It's through them I heard the music of Allen Ginsberg of Newark New Jersey and Alan Dugan from Brooklyn and Allen Grossman in Baltimore there and Alan Sondheim of New York City and all the Allens, a magnificent family, second only to the Alices. And Charles Reznikoff a great walker also of Manhattan, and Harry Crane from Chagrin Falls and Susie Howe, one of the Howes and Fanny her sister, and their nephew Bill, felicitous poets all of them, and May Swenson whom we all loved and Muriel too, and Langston Hughes up there in Harlem, I tried to get him to come to Áras Éanna many's the time but no dice and Gus Young in London and Trevor Joyce who published Gus and Trevor's Uncle Jimmy a truly great poet though not necessarily when he said he was and Gertie Stein and Bertie Brecht and Marcel Duchamp and Pierre Reverdy . . ."

At the bar I met up with Stephen Fredman who spoke of our mutual friend, Rani Singh, and then delighted me by asking me about my paper (which Rani Singh had given him a copy of at the Getty Institute)-I mean, the paper I gave at the previous conference there at Orono, all about Jack Spicer's use of folk music especially in his later poems (60s) like *Language* and *the Book of Magazine Verse* and how Harry Smith, who was doing the same thing, and Allen Sherman, who was doing something strangely coherent with folk music, were all working at the same time on the same project which was bigger than any one of them. And Bob Dylan. Anyway, it was an ambitious paper and (I thought) a groundbreaking one but (or so I thought) it died a death when I gave it and (I thought) no one would ever refer to it again unless I paid them, and how was I to get the money to do so, so that's why, when Fredman told me he'd been influenced by my paper, I sent thousands of mind kisses to Rani Singh and the Harry Smith Foundation through the airwaves.

Annie Finch was there and (I almost said) we got to meet for the first time, but indeed it was a reunion of sorts as she and I had known each other, way back when, in the way of poets, and in my case drunken poets, in Manhattan in the late 1970s, when a mere nod of the head from Ted Berrigan would make me feel weak with self-loathing for never, ever, would I approach the genius of Berrigan, and she, Annie Finch, was also seriously into performance. I was kind of young then and she must have been really young! Though still looking exactly the same! And we recalled this one particular restaurant we used to go to and the kinds of

cocktails we favored and the only thing that we drew a blank at was who had brought us together. I told her luckily no one was writing a biography of us otherwise they would be seriously upset we couldn't remember more about such a long-ago intimacy. Now I'm remembering I meant to get back to SF and send the play I wrote about Donald Judd's family (and Ashley and Wynonna Judd) because it came to me that back then, she was in it, so if anyone has her address let me know, we've drifted apart once again and this time I won't let it be another twenty-five years.

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What I Saw at the Orono Conference 2004, part 3

30 Jul 2004

Part three. Jackson Mac Low, the great procedural poet, takes the stage, and the conference settles into its Thursday.

What I Saw at the Orono Conference 2004

Thursday, June 24, 2004

Up at out of Steve and Jennifer's house by 8:00 a.m., and somehow found my way to Neville Hall where I located the first of the many panels I planned to visit. This one was about "The Visionary Poetics of Robert Duncan." I was always choosing and sometimes not very well, thus ignoring panels on Wallace Stevens, Louis Zukofsky, Theodore Roethke and Randall Jarrell. The choice seemed clear. Peter O'Leary was there, reading from a paper called "In My Psychological Concept," and I remember Steve Fredman's paper as well, which took up Duncan's bizarre volume "Letters," actually a product of the 1950s or so I think, but Fredman showed us that it represented a culmination of Duncan's entire late 40s phase and incidentally represented for him a new beginning, a Black Mountain beginning, as Duncan was always shoving his gondola off in new directions.

The reading by Jackson Mac Low was pretty great. Well, over the years I've seen him here and there and he's often great (at Small Press Traffic we had just finished voting him unanimously in as our Lifetime Achievement Winner for the year). But this time, I suppose to get into the 1940s motif, he went back to the very beginning and started his reading with a poem he wrote at age 16 or 18? Anyway from 1938 and it was called, "Hunger Strike." It's in Representative Works, and so are a few more early poems from the 1940s which he also read, giving them all the Jackson Mac Low treatment, like his mouth is a fireworks factory and someone's thrown in a lit match, watch out folks. It was all very dazzling and also brought vividly into the room a piece of the past, baby steps of a troubling postmodernism. It had been written so long ago I certainly never thought I'd hear "Hunger Strike" in my life. It was like the time FSG published

that compilation of several of Ashbery's earliest books in it, and he went around the country in support of that volume, and we in the audience found ourselves again back in time, hearing "He," a very old poem, for the very first time.

Then we heard another poet of the 1940s-this one called Harvey Shapiro, who gave a reading from his own work of many decades. The way Norman Finkelstein explained it to us, Shapiro also has a career in the editorial world, and he was editor of the NYT Book Review for years. And now he has come out with a brand new book called "Poets of World War II" from the Library of America. I was in the groove and could have listened to a great many more poets of the 1940s but instead it was lunch-time to be followed by more panels. His book has a lot of the poets of the 1940s in it, including Oppen, Bronk, Richard Eberhart, Berryman, Jarrell, Nemerov, Kenneth Koch, even Woody Guthrie, Zukofsky, even CO's like Everson and Lowell, and a handful of poems from the dire Lincoln Kirstein.

But instead I went back, took a nap, and missed out on what I later heard were some of the best panels of all. Robert van Hallberg spoke on the Pisan Cantos, Grant Jenkins on Melvin Tolson, Lyn Hejinian chaired an Objectivists panel, Susan Gilmore talked about Millay's war poetry, and also I missed an entire Pound session with Youngman Kim which I didn't want to miss because of his character, I feel like I missed a whole novel by Dickens.

There was Youngmin Kim, whom I gathered after observing him at a cocktail party was the top poet of Korea, with many stories about meeting this or that American poet and besting them at their own game. He was born in 1925 like many of the great American poets whom he listed. He said that on a visit to California in the mid-1960s he had tracked down Gary Snyder at some Marin retreat and stumbling through the grasses, he came across what he thought was a man and a woman. In fact the 'woman' was Snyder, Youngmin Kim had never seen such long hair on a man. "And years later, when he and I presided over the Seoul Poetry Conference of 1999, we shared a merry laugh over his womanhood." I would listen to his stories with my mouth open, not sure I was getting all of the wit. He reminded me of the poets of my youth, all of whom were braggarts, they just couldn't help it. Kim told me of his greatest accomplishment, writing the epic poem "San Diego" I think it was called, while working as a youth on a sampan from Hong Kong to Seoul. The amazing this was that this huge long poem, which rivals Hart Crane's "The Bridge" for beauty, was written entirely in English, a language which Kim did not really know at the time!

After lunch I went to see Panel 3C, "Robert Duncan and the Berkeley Renaissance" in Neville Hall. Kelly Holt gave a paper that explained who Ernst Kantorowicz was and how his social and aesthetic policies saw him in good stead, both in protesting Nazi race policies in the early 30s, and in taking a moral stance

against the McCarthyite hysteria of postwar California regents. Kantorowicz enters poetic history by becoming the teacher of many of the poets in the Berkeley Renaissance—Robert Duncan, Jack Spicer, Robin Blaser, and exposing them to his own personal history, he had been a member of the GeorgeKreis, the circle of intellectuals and Adonises that surrounded the German poet Stefan George in the Modernist era. The theory is that Spicer and Duncan and Blaser formed their ideas about poetic community in emulation of Kantorowicz' membership in the Georgekreis. Until recently however I was never sure how much, exactly, Spicer knew about Stefan George. Why it wasn't until 1980 that I realized his name was pronounced "Gayorga," and not our own humble "George" like "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" But anyway among the treasures we found recently in the Bancroft Library was a translation Spicer made of George's translation of Baudelaire's SPLEEN poem. Oh, the lineage, this was the kind of thing Allen Ginsberg always enjoyed. And also we found a questionnaire Spicer had answered regarding his poetic influences that makes it pretty clear that he'd been introduced to, and knocked on his ass by, the work of Stefan George at around the age of 18 or 19. So Kelly's paper took in a little of all these aspects of Kantorowicz' importance. Jeff Hamilton's paper was also good, but I didn't understand all of it. I had never met Hamilton before nor even heard of him and yet he was exactly the kind of guy I would like to take a class from. He seemed like he knew everything and knew how to explain it too. Andrew Mossin's paper on the homosexual impulses behind the "Venice Poem" was, as I expected, perfectly pleasurable and filled with insight—so much so that I wondered briefly if, during the time since I'd last seen Andrew, he'd gone gay. Then I remembered that nowadays any straight man or woman can do the gay thing exquisitely and it doesn't mean a thing about their real life sexual preference. It's like Scientology in reverse!

Jackson Mac Low and Anne Tardos were at dinner with us. Tardos wasn't reading herself, a pity for she has a coruscating, Tower of Babel style I've never heard duplicated in any of her imitators. Over dinner we decided who was for Nader and who wasn't, under the cover of explaining to our Canadian colleague Miriam Nichols why Nader was so idolized and despised at the same time. Indeed the atmosphere was all much more against Nader than against Bush. At the evening before, Creeley had apologized to Mac Low for having voted for Nader the first time around under the influence of his son, but this time he swore, he wouldn't.

"Did anyone see Vic?"

Vic? No, I didn't place the reference.

It was "Vic" from *Queer as Folk*, the gay male soap on Showtime cable channel which apparently Mac Low and Tardos watch faithfully. "Vic" is the uncle of one

of the main characters and also thus Sharon Gless's brother on the show, and just last Saturday Vic got killed off on the show, so picture their shock when they were walking through Neville Hall and bumped right into Vic face to face. "We were as close to him as I am to you!" they swore, and even though I didn't know who he was, I still wanted to get his autograph, it's the way I'm made. "We asked him what he was doing at Orono and he said he was going to be Robert Lowell!"

The big Saturday night event this year was to be a performance of a play which had been made out of the Lowell-Bishop letters, a two-person play. I couldn't make up my mind if this sounded like a good idea or a very, very camp idea. I liked the name of the playwright-Monique Fowler-who was also going to be playing Bishop opposite the Robert Lowell of "Vic"-but the play had a title that seemed determined to explain everything away before you even saw it. "One Atlantic: From Bangor to Rio." It barely made sense, and yet it made too much sense. As for "Vic," he is a Canadian actor who was one of the late Timothy Findlay's favorites and who also recently played Shakespeare in a new play called Swansong so perhaps Robert Lowell wasn't much of a stretch. Apparently Robert Lowell wrote that insane poem, "Skunk Hour," just a few miles from where we sat gabbing and eating, and apparently Elizabeth Bishop lived thousands of miles away enjoying the permanent Carnaval society of Rio. although maybe "enjoying" is the wrong word; still, one gets the idea that she's have a few drinks at sunset and then write to Lowell about her problems with that stern architect whom she loved so much.

Thus the conversation turned to the way high culture occasionally leaks into mass culture. Jennifer Moxley recalled the Fred and Ginger film, *Top Hat* (1935), in which a telegram comes and Ginger's dress designer reads it to her. "Come ahead-stop-stop being a sap-stop-you can even bring Alberto-stop-my husband is stopping at your hotel-stop-when do you start-stop." The dress designer frowns. "I cannot understand who wrote this!" he cries. Ginger snaps, "Sounds like Gertrude Stein." Anne Tardos recalled a Chabrol film in which a detective presses a madeleine on a recalcitrant suspect, saying "They're great for the memory." I always thought that Hitchcock's *The 39 Steps* was referencing Proust; if you recall, the plot revolves around the search for the UK music-hall performer, "Mr. Memory," who snaps into motion, spouting huge realms of data, when confronted by the visage of the leading lady, Madeleine Carroll. Coincidence? I think not.

In the middle of the dinner Doug Rothschild turned up, having driven all the way from Albany New York with Don Byrd. Doug was staying at Steve and Jennifer's house also, in the cutest room up in an old fashioned attic, the kind of room you picture Fairfield Porter having grown up in, splendid. This was great for me as it was my chance to spend a bit of time with Doug whom I met ten years or so or

more but have never gotten to see alone I don't think, and finally I realized what people were saying was right, all these years, he is a prince of a fellow. He switched back and forth between these two beautiful suits, one bright red like a cardinal, the other more of a mulligatawny, he was the most elegant man in Maine outside of J. Hillis Miller.

I had my one book that I got people to sign, it was an Advance Reading Copy of the old Best American Poetry of 2002. When I got it, tattered and bumped up a little around the edges, it had already been signed by four contributors, Anselm Berrigan, Duncan McNaughton, Clark Coolidge, and Clayton Eshleman. In San Francisco, I had run down Joseph Lease and Peter Gizzi (while he was here visiting). But Orono was like a minefield of "Best American Poets," I started with Creeley, the editor, and ran like Roger Bannister after the rest, Jackson Mac Low and Jennifer Moxley to start out with. I made a little mental list of who to spot and when. Some might think it stupid, so I had to think of a reason to persuade them. See, I was imagining things in my head that never came true. Soon that blue-covered book was bulging with people's names. Norman Finkelstein, Phil Metres, Ben Friedlander, Ted Enslin, and more. It's sitting here on my desk, my one souvenir I brought back with me. I could put it on Ebay, or I could keep it whole.

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What I Saw at the Orono Conference 2004, part 4

30 Jul 2004

Part four, and the plenaries begin — J. Hillis Miller, the Yale deconstructionist, chief among the eminences on hand.

The plenary speaker was J. Hillis Miller, who was introduced by Cassandra Laity, a scholar whom I never got to meet during my whole time at Orono, but who was instantly recognizable by her outfits wherever she went. They were distinctive as Olive Oyl's famous wraparound skirts, but in a different way, one that's hard to describe. They were hat-centric I guess. We were all trying to figure out how old J. Hillis Miller might be. He began his talk on Williams and Stevens by reminiscing on the days when he used to go to readings that they gave. Now, when could that have been? Miller, one of the great US deconstructionists from Yale, apparently lives not too far away from Orono and made this trip oh, for the hell of it. He pointed out that a conference filled with subject-centered papers wasn't his usual purview and launched into his paper by describing the unusual interest Stevens takes in the "indigene," the native son, the character colorful because so long rooted.

I took Miller's picture and told him how much I enjoyed hearing him speak about Stevens. He gave me a frosty headmasterlike look and said, "If you like hearing

about Stevens, then the next step is to read something he wrote. He's in the library you know." Then he spelled Stevens' name, letter by letter, while I responded by closing the lens cap mechanically wondering what I had done to unleash such contempt. "S," he said. "T," he continued. "E, V, E," the letters poured on with only the lightest of pauses between them. I pictured an exchange in which I denied being that ignorant of Stevens' poetry. I figured oh the hell with it. Later I was to have a less fraught encounter with J. Hillis Miller, one during which he un-bent enough to tell what the "J" stands for in his name.

While I was still blushing, another plenary session was beginning. This one sounded especially promising. Alan Trachtenberg spoke on, "The Noir Decade, Historical Perspectives of the 1940s." Well, I think maybe it might have been good for some kind of assembly of really bright students, but Trachtenberg wound up saying nothing that we didn't know already, about the historical conditions under which the noir phenomenon was born. Maybe it would make a good book, and he was able to isolate one of my favorite films, *Shadow of a Doubt*, as an early noir film, but in a way I was disappointed because I wanted to hear more synthesis, or even less synthesis if only a good reading of something.

Then at 9:30 another huge reading of the visiting scholars. They poured into this one, and I wanted to see my colleague Aaron Kunin read from his poems, but I missed him and got in only when Jonathan Skinner was reading. I guess I was feeling talkative and wanted to process, as we say here in San Francisco, all my emotions about all the millions of things I had seen and done that day. I cornered Jennifer in the bar and I filled her in, her patient gaze never wilting as I said this, that and the other thing and we commented on how drunk everyone was getting, except for us.

One of the graduate students at U Maine called Brian Carpenter, gave me a copy of his book, "Bluest Keys" (Daikusei Productions), a book of poetry with an emblem of an old fossil on the front of it. Or maybe it's a sand dollar. I found myself talking to Brian Carpenter as though I had known him awhile, and then I realized what it was, he is so similar in looks to another friend of mine who is also called Brian, the Memphis novelist Brian Pera, even down to the way each tilts his head when talking, a skeptical expression crossing their faces, even down to the ears you could pick up their heads like loving cups with handles, so to me it was like standing there talking to the first Brian, I wonder if I came off as being a bit over-familiar. Maybe that happens to people as they get older, everyone reminds me of someone I used to know, see, or lust over.

In any case Brian Carpenter is really his own self. I wonder if he might have been better off going to someplace like Temple that has a larger urban presence, or maybe people just get into the Maine groove after awhile and that seeps into

one's writing. What I see in "Bluest Keys" is a restricted vocabulary that, like Evan Holloway's sculptures of torqued but still "natural" tree branches, manages to evade the claims of the natural and the artificial by being forthright, wearing its heart on its sleeve. "Era and age and O my amour." The length of its sentences signals that it's some kind of homophonic transformation kind of piece. I mean, they're all short, a few words apiece. If he keeps it up he will be going places, good for him.

Another acquaintance from previous sessions of Orono Conference was Andrew Epstein the poet and scholar who now lives in Florida. The good news is that he has finished his book on O'Hara (and Ashbery and Baraka) and that b, Oxford University Press will publish it and c, it's called by the flamboyant, Harlequin title "Beautiful Enemies," which, Andrew assures me, is actually a quote from Emerson. Not Emerson, Lake and Palmer; the real Emerson of the 19th Century. Andrew is one of the best writers around and it was great to see him once more. And he is funny too. I told him that due to my health I've been taking so many prescriptions that I'm usually kind of happy most of the time but that little arouses me "short of a handjob." He looked about us at the unusually dour faces of our compadres and quipped, "Well, it's not going to be that kind of conference." (Ha ha, and yet for some it was indeed that kind of conference.) Also on hand were other O'Hara scholars whose books are about to appear or have recently appeared: Michael Magee, whose book *Emancipating Pragmatism*, also about O'Hara and Baraka and Emerson, came out on April Fools Day, and Lytle Shaw of NYU, whose book on *The Poetics of Coterie Wisconsin* will publish next year, which is not all that much about Emerson. And of course Maine is extremely lucky to have two superb O'Hara scholars working there right on the faculty, Ben Friedlander and Steve Evans both. For me it was an exciting opportunity to see these wise men once again and to ask them, for example, what they thought of the authenticity of the "new" O'Hara play that Olivier Brossard found among the Bunny Lang papers and then published in *The Yale Review*. Andrew reminded me (when we spoke of the upcoming event with "Vic" from *Queer as Folk* as Robert Lowell) of a previous encounter with celebrity on the campus of U-Maine Orono. It was the time that "Becky" from Roseanne came and I guess Andrew actually broke the ice and spoke to her, asking her why? Why was she there? And Becky reported that she was thinking of becoming a poet and that someone had told her there were a lot of poets at the Orono Conference. It must have been nice for her not to be pestered by fans for a week, but maybe not that nice because she never did become a poet and returned to acting instead. "Oh," he said, "did you see your review in *Rain Taxi*?" "No! What is it of?" I couldn't remember having written anything that *Rain Taxi* might ever review. "I don't know it's some play you wrote." Instantly it came to me—it must be *Island of Lost Souls*, that I wrote way

back when, and which Meredith and Peter Quartermain recently printed in their Nomados Series. I had forgotten all about it. Anxiously I said, "Well, was it a favorable review?" "Very favorable." "Who wrote the review?" Andrew said he didn't recognize the name, then adding, that he'd brought the magazine on the plane with him and he had it up in his room and that he'd bring me the review in the morning. Hooray! On the other hand I was thinking, gee, which of my friends reviewed that book? I couldn't imagine anyone who didn't know me doing such a favor. Well, I have been reviewed by strangers in the past, but they always seem to carve me up and leave me in pieces. So this was going to be a switch. Rain Taxi is the magazine you never see, but when you do, you see heaping piles of it, like Steve Wolfe sculptures, and they're always for free. I don't understand the economy of it, but I'm from San Francisco where everything costs the earth and one just learns to do without.

Finally the best part, sitting around afterwards, at 3 or 4 in the morning, around the kitchen table at Steve and Jennifer's house, conducting a post mortem of what had occurred, who had worn what, and why poetry would or wouldn't forever be changed in the days ahead of us. Cartographer of all my days, let me see that part again, go back to that one part around the table. That was the cool part.

Friday, June 25, 2004

I stayed out so late that I missed the first panel entirely. 8:30 was too early for me I guess. Doug and I made it to the campus only just in time to see the reading that had been hurriedly moved to an early morning slot to fill up the absence of Harriette Mullen. La Mullen had planned to take a Greyhound bus from Los Angeles to Maine, but missed it. Wow, that's a long trip to come all the way on a bus to give a reading at 9:45 on a Friday morning! In her place we heard instead four pretty impressive guys, Bill Howe, Kasey Mohammad, Bob Perelman, and Lytle Shaw. Now that I look back it's a shame I missed so many good panels that morning. I particularly wanted to go to the Lorine Niedecker panel and ask Jayne Marek what "anent" means as in the title of her paper, "'Bird-Witted on Black Hawk Island': A Poetics of Animals anent Lorine Niedecker and Marianne Moore." Well, closer to home I can ask Carol Snow I suppose, the SF poet who has just come out with a new book with the Zukofskyan title of *The Seventy Prepositions* and she has a poem for every one, so there's bound to be an "Anent" poem, or at least definition (depending on whether or not "anent" really is a proposition). And, the Gwendolyn Brooks panel looked good too. And also the Eliot panel I could have heard about Olaf Stapledon

Margaret Avison went everywhere with this other older woman, who was tall, stood with exquisite posture, and pure white hair all dolled up into a beehive or a sugary white, I think her name was June. Apparently June is another resident at

the old folks home that Avison lives at, and came along to help see to her. Some speculated that the two women were lovers, which would have made a nice image, but I don't know, I'm skeptical. Maybe in San Francisco it's easy to spot, but outside of the big coastal cities all women dress like Lesbians. It's just their way. Besides, Avison is such a Christian I can't picture her countenancing something that Jahweh might have forbidden in the Old Testament. You'd have to read Avison's poetry to understand my conviction. After reading "The Dumbfounding" on the plane I put it aside, thinking, "Wow, she's more religious than Mel Gibson!" I try to juggle my disapproval of fundamentalist politics and my admiration of Avison's effects

Creeley sank into a seat next to Avison, and a press photographer ambled over to take a few dozen candid shots of the two of them as they sat there, jawing. They are now the remaining survivors of the famous 1963 Vancouver Poetry Festival, having outlived Philip Whalen, Warren Tallman, Allen Ginsberg, Denise Levertov, Charles Olson, etc. I wonder what it must feel like to be the last two alive. She wore a beige blouse with a Peter Pan collar, and over it a extraordinary cowl-neck sweater of horizontal stripes of peach, red, white, olive, beige, blue, and black. I will see that sweater in my dreams! She carries a cane covered in some electric blue material like bicyclists tag onto their bikes to prevent being run over.

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What I Saw at the Orono Conference 2004, part 5

31 Jul 2004

Part five. The Canadian poet Margaret Avison, nearly unknown to the Americans in the room, gives the reading Kevin could not stop thinking about.

[Margaret Avison]

At the end a standing ovation. Now as I come to write this down, I wonder what made Avison's reading so extraordinary. I asked a few Canadians if they were familiar with her reading style, thinking perhaps she was one whom every Canadian has seen, the way we have all seen, oh, I don't know, Leslie Scalapino. But no. At least I asked Louis Cabri and Miriam Nichols and neither of them had ever laid eyes on her. Apparently she's not on the circuit the way some other poets are. She's not really into "career" that much. I don't think you have to be "into career" to like to give readings per se, but apparently Avison spends all of her time in soup kitchens ladling out food to the homeless of Toronto and environs. That's what she'd rather do. So partly it was this myth about her being "too good to read" so we felt lucky, privileged to have seen her. About three weeks later, back home in San Francisco, Dodie, Glen and I went to see Jane Russell at the Castro Theater. She came on to discuss her career and to introduce

a new print of Howard Hawks' *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, but she surprised us by getting up and doing a big chunk of her nightclub act, singing Frank Loesser's "Buttons and Bows," and "Bye Bye Baby," the great Jule Styne-Leo Robin number from 1949 she sings with Marilyn Monroe in the movie:

Although I know that you care, Won't you write and declare
That though on the loose, You are still on the square.

I'll be gloomy, But send that rainbow to me, Then my shadows will fly. Though
you'll be gone for a while, I know that I'll be smiling with my baby, by and by.

In addition, Russell launched into a piece of "special material" written for her by Peggy Lee (!!!). "This is to the tune of Big Bad John, but it's called," she paused, "Big Bad Jane." The crowd was screaming in delight. I whispered to Dodie, "This is what Margaret Avison was like." The two women, born in the same year, are both avid Christians, and although now in their mid-eighties, they share a tremendous vitality, a passion for living, as well as a predilection for that electric blue, which was woven in and out of Russell's hair as well as her blouse. Each by herself was enough to make a grown man cry.

After her reading Avison sank into one of the auditorium seats and a little girl rushed over to her with a summer bouquet. They made a piquant contrast of youth and age, like a Victorian problem picture. The little girl's mother took a few photos of her daughter and the elderly poet. She, the mother, had written a paper on Avison. Avison wrote in my book, "High school Kevin." That was flattering, oh, but who knows what she was getting at, I suppose it could have been a cut of some kind. But anyhow I called Dodie up on the cell phone and told her, that for me, the whole conference came together once Margaret Avison got up to the part where she goes into a hotel and there's a big mural of a horse above the desk.

I think this must have been the day that, for lunch, Doug Rothschild and I went to the cafeteria on campus and somehow, through some grotesque parody of scholarly fraternity, I wound up sitting next to J. Hillis Miller. He didn't seem to remember our horrid encounter of the day before. Good. Instead he told us about going to visit China. The last time he was in China, the University he was visiting gave him a diploma, but it was in Chinese and he couldn't remember afterwards which university it had been because the whole diploma was in Chinese. I said, maybe he could distinguish it from the other honorary doctorates he'd received because surely it was the only Chinese one. But he disagreed, He is immensely popular in China-like Wham! He's been there 6 or 7 times and has received over 40 honorary degrees. But (he said modestly) that's nothing compared to the way the Chinese worship Frederic Jameson, as if he were a God. At one banquet there

was a big bas-relief of Mao and one of Jameson and they all ate underneath these two big red faces. "And you know Fred doesn't miss a trick," he added.

I told J. Hillis how I'd been thinking about Stevens' use of the figure of the indigene in his poetry, comparing it cleverly to the way the UMaine cafeteria sells this delicious ice cream made from the milk of cows from the own campus dairy, and thus it's indigenous too. "Yes, well, no ice cream for me, thanks," said Miller politely. Thus we left things at a stalemate. PS, what he wound up doing with his doctorates is that, from now on when he gets one, he'll mark it with a little pencil in one corner in tiny letters "Beijing University" or whatever, and then he'll know. We should all have such problems I suppose.

That afternoon Thomas Travisano, who has edited the Lowell-Bishop letters, gave a presentation of these letters to the assembled crowd. His talk went smoothly until he decided to try out a new definition of what was post-modern, a post-modernity in which Bishop and Lowell would play central roles. This position is one TT had sketched out for readers earlier in his 1999 volume *Midcentury Quartet*. Many hands shot in the air, and there was quite a fray, Travisano must have fled that hall thinking all the hounds of hell had their teeth in his ass. Robert van Hallberg really gave it to him, the crowd went wild. Face to face with Travisano, I didn't want to upset him by asking him anything about his vision of postmodernism, so thinking of the recent Duncan-Levertov letters and how they seem to libel the living from beyond the grave, I asked TT if he was censoring anything in the Bishop-Lowell correspondence. "Oh not a bit. Luckily the people who they were negative about are all dead." A shade of perplexity crossed his elfin face. "Richard Eberhart is dead, I hope? And Karl Shapiro?" But nobody knew. Isn't there a "Celebrity Death Watch" that keeps track of these things for us? Remember how when Katharine Hepburn died, the bookies had it 6-5 that Bob Hope would be next? Actually just the day before Peter Middleton had been describing to me, over lunch, being on the staff as a Visiting British poet or something at a University in Florida and Richard Eberhart was on the staff there, incredibly aged, but still hoping, just as I would, that the young people in their fifties had heard of him, and disappointed when it became clear Peter hadn't. He was born in 1904 after all. Like Zukofsky, but no one expects Zukosky to be alive. People said *The King and I* was written about him because in the 20s or whenever he was actually the tutor to the little princes of Siam.

Across the room I saw Michael Scharf, who had come with a sleeping bag and hoped to crash in somebody's dorm room. He's a poet I think very highly of and a very sweet person with a big heart. Michael drove up with a friend about whom I was very curious, the critic Stephen Burt, whose book on Randall Jarrell I had read at Michael's recommendation. I shouldn't call him "the critic" because he is

also a poet, but I didn't know that when I shook his hand. He is really an odd duck, but his features are exquisitely sculptured, like the tiny bones of one of the legendary 40s beauties like Denham Fouts or Moira Shearer. I couldn't take my eyes off him. It wasn't a sexual attraction, more the gaze of the connoisseur for the Ming vase.

In comparison Mike Scharf looked sleepy and gaunt, as though the drive from Boston had been a Long March across thousands of miles. "Are you hungry?" He nodded. I opened my bag and pulled out some peanuts. "They're healthy nuts and the doctor will approve," I said. His pale hand closed around them. I had to go to a panel so I gave Mike the keys to my rented car, told him to stretch out, take forty winks. It was just outside in the parking lot. While Mike slept in my car, I went to one panel that sounded promising. This was "Literary History in/of the 1940s." It would have been even better had Kathleen Johnson been able to contribute (except that unfortunately she couldn't make it to Maine) because she had promised a paper on a topic that interests me mightily, the famous photographs of "The Gotham Book Mart: November 9, 1948." These photos, done for LIFE Magazine I think, show an uneasy constellation of American poetry in the postwar period. Ostensibly they are backstage views of Dame Edith Sitwell's triumphant reading tour of the USA, but in fact they were staged carefully by the editors to give a highly mediated picture of what was and was not to be the dominant modes of poetry (and a bit of drama and fiction) in the Cold war period. So they're all there, kind of looking at the camera, some looking away, some front and center hamming it up, some disgruntled, some discreet: Auden's up on a ladder, Marianne Moore and Elizabeth Bishop pose beneath him, Delmore Schwartz blinks at the camera, Jose Garcia Villa holds up the doorway. And many more including Gore Vidal, Tennessee Williams, Eberhart, Jarrell, the poets of the 1940s. You can see this photo at <http://www.finneganswake.org/GothamWriters.htm>. Well, as I say, Kathy Johnson wasn't there but happily she's working on a book about this topic so in time we'll all be able to read her investigations. I went anyway to the panel, though I had the feeling it wouldn't keep me that long, that I was about to commit that wretched act they call, "Panel Hopping."

So happily I caught David Adams' historical-bibliographical-detective talk on two late 40s magazines, The Golden Goose and Chronos. This talk came with the most elaborate hand-outs you've seen since the "Smell O Vision" cards John Waters gave out in Polyester. I bet many brought them home with them, packed carefully in their luggage, as a challenge to the future, can I possibly improve on David Adams' handouts? The boring thing is that within the last six months ago I read an article here in San Francisco that was written by a poet whose name I

can't remember. He said that he was living in the Bay Area in the 1950s, a very young lad, and took a job at some kind of office, and little by little discovered that the dry, humorless, spotlessly turned out fellow who was the marketing manager in the corner office had had a past life among the poets and bohemians of ten years before. He allowed that he had known William Carlos Williams and Creeley and Olson. Indeed, the now tamed executive was Richard Wirtz Emerson. All through David Adams' talk I kept expecting him to bring up this memoir. I can almost picture myself reading it, recalling vividly the tabloid size page, the black and white illustrations, but I can't remember the name of the magazine or the author. Maybe it was George Evans-someone like him, of that generation; maybe it was August Kleinzahler.

Anyway frustrated, I slipped out of the room and found yet another panel, this one moderated by Al Filreis, one of those motley panels where they throw everything together and call it, "Multiple Voices." You'd think they would be more variegated than the "Wallace Stevens II" and "III" panels. This panel was actually titled "Beginning in the 1940s." I was sorry to have missed Susan Vanderborg's paper on Jackson Mac Low. Looked like Jackson missed it, too. He must have sat through a lot of papers in his lifetime, but if someone were giving a paper on my work, I'd be right in the first row, bowing modestly, nodding my head, perhaps coughing gently when the speaker advanced some opinion about the work I personally didn't subscribe to. And I'd jump to my feet as soon as the speaker shut his mouth, leading the applause, calling out for an encore. You wouldn't have to coax me, no sir. But it looked as though Jackson and Anne had sailed away like two ships in the night. I did hear young Arlo Quint, another of the U Maine grad students, give a paper about the late Bern Porter, another enigma. Porter is one of those figures, like Oppen, that I think of as "high concept" - even people who don't care about poetry can grasp their essence in one sentence, in Porter's case, he was a physicist who worked on the Manhattan Project and was so shattered by guilt when the atom bombs fell on Japan that he became a poet. In such formulations the truth always gets lost a bit (to the "poetic") and so they're even more interesting to unpack, and Quint did a yeoman's job working this out. I like him. Someone told me that he and Ben Friedlander had gone to the old folks home where Porter lived, so that Quint could interview him for his paper, and he (Porter) died the next day! I asked him if that was the case. "Yes," he said, mournfully. It was the saddest story I'd ever heard.

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What I Saw at the Orono Conference, part 6

31 Jul 2004

Part six. Word reaches Orono that Carl Rakosi, the last of the original Objectivists, has died; Kevin had greeted him again and again on the streets of San Francisco.

[Arlo Quint's Interview with Bern Porter]

"Bern Porter was too far gone to speak, and the whole room smelled. I went back again, same story." What a horrid interview, and I thought I'd conducted some duds. I told Quint that Bern Porter had been very obliging to me when I'd queried him regarding the life of Jack Spicer. And how far apart the worlds of Berkeley and Maine really are. It was odd indeed how there was a Maine connection to everything. Then I read on the Poetics List that Bern Porter can be glimpsed in the film of Stephen King's *Thinner*, which I remember seeing when it came out. A gypsy plays a trick on him. How ironic! In any case the panel wasn't the time or place for any of us to express our doubts about Porter's legacy, he had died so recently it would have been like stomping on his grave. But I keep looking at those "Founds" and just not seeing anything but warmed over Mad Magazine surrealism. You could assemble a million of them and they're not going to assuage your guilt, not if you have a shred of decency left in you. I wondered if Porter had come to Maine in penance, because you always have to wear long underwear there which must be so uncomfortable. I missed someone else give a paper on Ashbery, and another fellow gave a talk on James Laughlin's poetic career. This fellow was cute in a preppy sort of way, in his early 30s I imagine and I was sorry to have missed a chance to hear him talk more. At the Q & A Marjorie Perloff raised her hand and said, "This question is for Greg there . . . Greg, you stated that James Laughlin was okay with being passed over for the awards and prizes and recognition. Well, I knew him well-extremely well-we were close-and" - voice darkening-"he was not okay with that." Greg defends his position, and Marjorie shakes her head, whether in disbelief or in sorrow I don't know. Really it wasn't even a question. I hate those panels about "Beginning in the 1940s," they might as well do a paper on Jewel at American Poets of the 1970s conference and say, well, she was alive in the 1970s. Now, looking at my program, I see that the man's name (who was so handsome, like a track star at Mineola Prep) is Gregory Peter Barnhisel of Duquesne, and his book-coming out in February-will be called *James Laughlin, New Directions, and the Remaking of Ezra Pound*. It promises to answer the question I have always asked myself, how was it that after the disgrace of the Fascist broadcasts, Laughlin was able to keep Ezra Pound's name alive through marketing, even to the extent of managing to increase its cultural capital, partly I suppose by romanticizing the image of the old man locked up in the mental ward in DC, etc., so that's another book to look forward to.

I must have missed the announcement, but I sidled up to one group that included Burt Hatlen and gathered that Carl Rakosi had died. One boy turned to me and pointed to a young woman who, he said in awestruck tones, had burst into tears upon hearing this news announced in the panel she was attending. "She couldn't stop crying," he said. "Maybe she's his relation." I could have thought of a hundred things to say, but Burt said, "Later we'll think of a way to memorialize Rakosi. We were his publisher after all." I take it that he had been to Orono many times in the past and had been a particular highlight of the conference on "American Poets of the 1930s" in 1993. I said to Burt that if we were back in San Francisco we would have a candlelight march in his honor. He looked skeptical. Maybe not knowing that in San Francisco we light candles at the drop of a hat and commemorate, invigilate, protest everything with candles. "Do you have any candles in your office?"

"No," he said. "Not a one."

"I'll go to Safeway," I said. "Buy some candles."

"We'll talk about this later," Burt said. "I can tell you're upset. Maybe we'll read some of his poems, later."

"By candlelight?" I cried. "That will be gorgeous."

I thought of the many times I had stopped Rakosi on the street in San Francisco, introduced myself again and again. He had helped us at Small Press Traffic by signing a broadside of one of his poems, "Woman." to raise money for a good cause. When Brian Stefans and I wrote our play *The American Objectivists*, we dropped Rakosi from the *dramatis personae*, because we couldn't think of anything foolish about him. He was like Doris Twitchell Allen, I thought, the Maine doctor whose memory we were honoring: he'd been determined to live through his century. And now he'd let his hand slip.

Kimberly Bird, from UC-Santa Cruz, who works at UC Berkeley's Oral History Program, mentioned that she had interviewed Rakosi for 19 hours for a so-called "life history." "Well, what do you think, Kim? Don't you think Carl Rakosi would have wanted a candlelight march in his honor?"

Kim was slightly non-committal. I took it that in all 19 hours of their interviews, Rakosi hadn't expressed an opinion one way or another on candles. I thought to myself, "If Michael Scharf is still sleeping in my car, I'm gonna wake his ass up and make him help me find some candles."

He was game, and indeed a whole slew of poets got into our cars and went to a very late lunch. (It was around 5:00 p.m.) Good enough, not that Orono has thousands of restaurants. Indeed unless you've seen the new thriller by M. Night

Shyamalan you won't believe how primitive a little village can get! I walked on the sidewalk with tall, fetching Paul Stephens from Columbia, one of the organizers of the upcoming Zukofsky 100 conference there. He looked at me, like, "And who are you?" "I'm Kevin Killian," I said brightly, pointing to my ever-present badge. He paused. "Oh," he said. "I've heard of you," he hazarded.

On both streets of the town, I went with Barbara Cole and Greg Biglieri to hunt up some candles. There was one store that only had a few foodstuffs in it, aisles and aisles of empty shelves, here and there some Twinkies and the like. We split up to save time. I found a New Age shop where candles were about 2.00 apiece. I was about to buy a slew of them and Greg ran to me, saying that Barbara had found a combination video rental and hardware store where the candles were cheap, cheap, cheap. Sure enough, these fat stubby white candles about four inches high, in boxes of 6, each box was about a dollar! The best bargain in decades. At this point none of us was really sure whether or not we could persuade anyone else to carry a candle through campus on a candlelight march for Carl Rakosi, but we each swore to carry one, possibly two ourselves, and Barbara Cole donated her lighter to the cause. So I think we got only about 50 candles, and then went to lunch feeling pretty righteous. I always think that after a death, action's imperative, otherwise you just kind of stew in it.

At the Bear Inn I got to sit with Steve Shoemaker on whom I can always count to give me the lowdown on the Objectivists. He was the one of many I encountered on my trip, many guys who, for some reason, were traveling for the first time after the birth of their children, leaving their young at home with their wives. It was almost as if they were all bachelors again but none of them seemed willing to relish this freedom, all of them looked pensively at photos of their kids while showing them to me. They seemed a bit surprised they weren't having a better time, that they were missing being at home. Then there was I, nodding and cooing at these digital photos of adorable little infants who nearly all of them are girls for some reason. Here in San Francisco there hasn't been a baby girl born in years as far as I know. Steve had already given his talk, on Oppen's silence during the 1940s, and was reveling in the panel's position that the talismanic position of the poet during this decade was silence. It was all very ironic in the Alanis Morissette sense. I was thinking of, say, Jane Fonda's absence from the movies after Martin Ritt's *Stanley and Iris* (1990), and how she decided to end her hiatus by returning to the screen playing Jennifer Lopez' mother-in-law in the upcoming comedy feature *Monster-in-Law*, directed by the man who did *Legally Blonde*. Or even more provoking, why have there been so few Meg Tilly pictures lately?

Then when I got back to the campus I showed our big purple bag of white candles to Burt. "Now we can hold the candlelight march after all!" I cried. Absently he stroked his chin. "Well, we're planning on doing something," he allowed.

Doug Rothschild and I sat through Marjorie Perloff's speech, which was pretty good and predicated on a single proposition, that Samuel Beckett was the world's greatest war poet, even though in all of his work he never mentions the word "war." It was a kind of Ripley's Believe It or Not speech and sure enough provokes a number of reactions, especially people saying, indeed he uses the word "war" continually throughout his work. Maybe Professor Perloff was actually limiting her remarks to a few stories in Beckett's collection *Stories and Texts for Nothing*. She gave a biographically-based account of Beckett's war years and stressed the extent in which Beckett risked his life as a member of the French Resistance, and indeed the medals and glory that he accrued after the war once the Vichy Republic had been dissolved.

Joan Retallack's speech followed almost immediately. Oddly enough she and Perloff might as well have been twins at the same business, for Retallack elected to speak on the dubious war record of Gertrude Stein. It almost seemed as if she was debating an invisible opponent, the sly, vicious, take-no-prisoners Janet Malcolm, whose *New Yorker* article on Stein had made more of an impression of many than they had believed to be the case at the time.

I'm probably wrong, but, the picture Joan gave me was revisionary, emblematic. In her sure hands she built up a picture of a different Gertrude Stein than the one we knew, this one aged, uncertain, scared to death of her own foolishness, unsure of how little or how much to deal with the Vichy officers who patrolled her town. A writer who, if she was blind, had blinded herself to the consequences of her own actions through a superior dedication to the word. Faced with the iniquity of Nazi persecution and the inevitable compromise with collaboration, she resembled no other character in literature more than Mrs. What's her Name in *A Passage to India*. Mrs. Moore.

Through both these talks Doug was writing down little quotes, a few words here and there, quite industriously, on pages in a notebook. Later on, when I heard him read, I realized he had been making up a poem, collaged from different talks we had heard all the day long, Perloff's and Retallack's most obviously. I thought I was good at multi-tasking but next to him I'm a dreamer, a drifter. Then I got to meet, in person, Lyman Gilmore, who wrote a good biography of the poet Joel Oppenheimer (*Don't Touch the Poet*) and with whom I had been in touch by phone or letter trying to untangle the relations between Oppenheimer and Jack Spicer. Gilmore is a great guy, and I said to him that I'd seen in the program that he is now coming out with a biography of William Bronk! So soon since your last

biography! "Well," he said mildly, "that was in 1998." Was it that long ago, it seems like just yesterday, but still it would take me ten or fifteen years to write another biography, especially on a figure as mysterious as Bronk! I wrote to him long ago (Bronk) asking him for advice, advice to a young poet type of thing, and he wrote back the single gloomiest letter I've ever gotten in the mail. It was written in dwindling spirals, each word visibly smaller than the one before it, and basically it was saying that if you've decided to become a poet, you're fucked. That said, I can't wait to read Gilmore's life of Bronk.

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What I Saw at the Orono Conference 2004, part 7

01 Aug 2004

Part seven. The subject turns to painting and poetry — the pairing, Duncan and Jess, that Kevin knew best from home.

Saturday, June 26, 2004

If I missed a lot of good papers I managed to coax a few out of my fellow colonists. Tim Gray, who works at the College of Staten Island with my friend Sarah Schulman, gave a paper on Morris Graves that was excellent, showing not only the extent that his Graves' painting influenced a range of West Coast painters, including Rexroth, Ferlinghetti, Gary Snyder, William Everson, but also made a call for a new way of looking at West Coast poetry that would recognize painting as an integral part of the writing, the way we interchange the poets and painters of the New York School. I guess for this argument to work you have to produce some powerful West Coast painters and more and more Morris Graves had come into my world, as Kylie Minogue might have said. Tim had some super handouts, Xeroxes of some Graves paintings that knocked my socks off. Sometime in the early 50s Jack Spicer went to a Graves exhibition and wrote "Hibernation" in tribute to Graves' painting with that title.

Hibernation-After Morris Graves

Deeper than sleep, but in a room as narrow
The mind turns off its longings one by one,
Let's beautiful black fingers snap the last one,
Remove the self and lie its body down.
The Future chills the sky above the chamber.
The Past gnaws through the earth below the bed.
But here the naked Present lies as warmly
As if it rested in the lap of God.

Happily Tim has established that Graves' "Hibernation" was painted in Ireland in 1953-4, so there's no use assigning Spicer's tribute poem to an earlier date than that, thank God for small mercies. If anyone is interested the new Clear Cut Anthology has a great memoir by Wesley Wehr about his relationship with Graves, Mark Tobey, and other leading lights of the Seattle school in the im-

mediate post war period. Anyway that's one talk (part of a panel on "Poetry and the War Resisters Internment Corps") that I'm sorry I missed. All right Tim. (Since coming back from Maine, I've heard from Matthew Stadler that Wesley Wehr died, very suddenly, and won't be finishing his memoir of the period after all, though a lot of work was done on it. Hopefully his papers will be transferred to some Northwestern Archive, including the autobiographical writings.)

Later that Saturday night I asked Brian Reed what the feeling was in Seattle about Graves and if there had been much interchange with Theodore Roethke. I liked meeting Reed quite a bit, he says he did his graduate work at Stanford and even that I couldn't really hold against him. I was thinking to myself, of all the resources there in the room! But if I understood him correctly there are two camps in Seattle and one of them holds that Roethke was the great creative genius, the other goes for Graves, and that not a little of the gay-straight split fuels the vociferousness of these two opinions. Reed says you can actually visit Roethke's house, how weird is that. Possibly you would get a sense about how and why the work was done the way it was. One time I got to prowl through the rank basement apartment on California Street at Van Ness where Spicer wrote *The Holy Grail*, and it all came alive to me in a way I hadn't anticipated, I almost felt him tangibly, the outlines of a ghost, maybe his.

Anyhow I began to think that what I wanted more of at this conference was an account of how poetry and the visual arts influenced each other in this decade. There must have been enormous interchange, but only rarely did I hear anything about it directly. (Such as in Tim Gray's paper.) Maybe it's a San Francisco thing, our paradigmatic couple being Robert Duncan, a poet, always paired with Jess Collins, the painter, that we see things in this binary way that isn't really the case elsewhere? And indeed sometimes I get tired of always hearing about the porousness of Duncan and Jess and how they were really two sides of the same creative mind. A little of that-I mean a lot of that-goes a long way. But elsewhere in the Conference I found that most of the scholars were ignoring the visual arts big time.

My own, 8:30 panel was called "The Northern California Poetry Scene in the 1940s." It featured a paper on the folklorist and anthropologist Jaime de Angulo by Rick Seddon from New Mexico. Rick gave us a picture of De Angulo as "shaman-like but not a shaman," so much was clear. I did not realize that De Angulo was a medical doctor from Johns Hopkins and isn't that where Gertrude Stein went to school? There's something I find antipathetic about De Angulo, and maybe it's his western ways. He didn't really seem to like anything very much, and his letters are amusing for his lack of interest in what the other person is all about. He mentions to Pound in every letter, "I have never read your poetry and I

have never read any poetry except for my own." Seddon concentrated on the relations between De Angulo and Robinson Jeffers, new material to me and (I missed the dates) something that had occurred way back in the 1920s I guess?

Kelly Holt, who is editing the Spicer letters with me, acted on a tip Andrew Schelling passed along and re-covered a lot of interesting material in the De Angulo papers at UC Santa Cruz, connecting De Angulo with Spicer and Duncan in the immediate postwar period in which Spicer studied informally with De Angulo in the spring of 1947 and in which, slightly later, Duncan became his secretary and typist in the rough final period when he was basically wasting away from cancer. Between Duncan's "A Crissmuss Pome For Haimee," and Spicer's "An Answer to Jaime," I get the picture that De Angelo's strangeness and eccentricity provoked both poets; they don't seem really to have cared for him all that much, perhaps he was too strange? (Duncan later spoke of De Angulo as being a pioneer of the transgender movement, as the drugs he took for his illness, hormonal in nature, gave him certain opposite-sex characteristic which blended bizarrely with his he-man image. It was his exposure as a nurse to these same drugs that encouraged the GI who became Christine Jorgensen to continue down the path towards becoming a woman, at roughly the same period.) If De Angulo encouraged the young poets of Berkeley to secede California from the rest of the world, I don't know if he helped them or hurt them. Duncan's "Crissmuss Pome" (which is in manuscript at the De Angulo papers) must be from 1948? Its very first word is "Wallace," and it sure isn't Wallace Stevens. (Maybe that's coy, of course I mean it's an allusion to the socialist candidate Henry Wallace who ran in the 1948 election.)

Wallace yawk yawk yawk Yawk Russia yawk yawk yawk yawk freedom of yawk yawk he's a fashist [sic] yawk yawk

Kimberly Bird, the young woman who had interviewed Carl Rakosi at length for Cal's Oral History Project, gave an interesting talk on Kenneth Rexroth and his movement away from broad-based social causes into a more private, domestic poetry during the course of the 1940s, mirroring to a great extent the "privatization" of US poetry as a whole. What the paper did was exemplary, linking the isolated project of one atypical American poet with that of the nation, and testing the theory in various ways. Smart, savvy, and very chic, La Bird "came to the conference with her mother!" one young fellow whispered to me, speaking for a whole slew of amorous horndogs who, blown away by Bird's exquisite, California good looks, had flattered themselves into perhaps believing they might really have had a chance with her if only she hadn't brought along her mother as cicerone. What men will believe! I didn't get to meet the mother

myself. But I hope this will start a trend and I can meet more parents of scholars, survey their puzzlement and pride.

My own contribution to the panel was a diminished one because I had originally hoped to "present" with Peter Gizzi, who as it turned out couldn't come after all. We were calling the talk, "Editing Jack Spicer," and my allocation of the talk clocked in at about 9 minutes. To fill out the remainder of the time I widened the talk to announce some recent discoveries we have made, and read from a poem, "Night shades crawl," which we have found inside a book which Spicer is now believed to have worked on as a ghostwriter, a novel published by a "mainstream press" as they say, in the year 1961. (The exact extent of Spicer's help on his pal's novel has yet to be determined or confirmed.) The novel's ostensible author is still alive, apparently, and I wonder if I could get him to talk about it for the record. My readers will appreciate how delicate such an interview would be . . . Gee, Mr. X, did you really pay Jack Spicer fifty dollars to write a whole novel for you?

Well, we'll see. Certainly I've asked questions more indelicate yet. Also I mentioned the possibility that Spicer's 1964 poem, "A redwood forest is not invisible at night," might also come from another sequence besides "Thing Language" in which it was published in 1965 (LANGUAGE). I'm getting the feeling that Spicer worked simultaneously at several different projects, and that any particular lyric might have been used to fit a hole in a sequence, though not necessarily intended originally as part of that sequence-i.e., a more workmanlike approach to poesis than the "dictated" seer that Blaser has written about in "The Practice to Outside," the afterword to the 1975 edition of the COLLECTED BOOKS OF JACK SPICER.

It would have been a better presentation with Peter in it, but *c'est la vie!* Afterwards several consulted me with suggestions about what to do with my editing problems. Steve Shoemaker talked about the visionary editing practice of Jerome McGann at the University of Virginia-and he wasn't the only one. Steve Fredman was very supportive and helpful.

At this point in my notes, which I transcribed from notes I wrote on my jeans, I see that Wallace Stevens somewhere said, "In the face of an overwhelming actuality, consciousness takes the place of the imagination." Was this something J. Hillis Miller shared with me? Or was it someone in the audience at my panel? I wrote the word AIDS next to the quote, thinking, what? That this was the overwhelming actuality that had occurred in my lifetime. Had consciousness then taken the place of the imagination, I can't decide. Sometimes I think yes, sometimes no.

Following my paper I went to another plenary to hear Alan Filreis from the Kelly Writers House in Philadelphia talking about "Modernism and Anticommunism in the 1940s." His paper was always amusing and filled with good jokes. Basically he had found an amazing trove of anti-Communist material which suggested that, in the minds of many poets and scholars of the postwar period, Communism had infiltrated Modernism and that it was time to throw the baby out with the bathwater. Thus there were a number of "Purity Leagues" and "Red Squads" among the poetry world, magazines determined to wipe out modernism and return poetry to its Georgian roots. Filreis quoted from many editorials and also the private correspondence of the magazine editors. They weren't all dopes either, he made that clear, the way that Whittaker Chambers was no dope and actually did know quite a lot about poetry. These guys were determined to get rid of Modernism and they nearly did, at least in the 1950s they had thinned it out to a mere white paste of Robert Frost and Scott Fitzgerald and other "safe" writers they could parade around on State Department money and brag that the US always respected the rights of intellectuals. Ha! And he (Al Filreis) had penetrated the archives of Poetry Magazine and seen how Jackson Mac Low had often submitted his work to them, and he'd seen the internal memos on the sides of Jackson's query letter and the handwriting was like (I paraphrase) "Don't print anything by this Communist agent."

Then I had lunch with Alan Gilbert. No, first Carla Billittieri drove me and Alan back to her house in Old Town, because Alan needed to pick up the slides he had prepared for his lecture. I first met Carla in Orono, I bet she didn't have an inkling of an idea that one day she would be living there permanently! She is brilliant, chic, and very tough, and says what she thinks which I always appreciate. I must have looked tired because as soon as we were inside her place, she's all like, Kevin come in and sit down and what would you like to eat? I said that me and Alan were going out to eat. Yes but, she insisted, sit down now. We sat around the kitchen table and Carla pulled out a big tub of blueberries, big as scarabs. She said in Maine they're cheap, like candy in Mexico City.

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What I Saw at the Orono Conference 2004, part 8

03 Aug 2004

The eighth and final dispatch carries the conference to its close, and Kevin back to San Francisco.

[Eating Blueberries]

She said in Maine they're cheap, like candy in Mexico City. Oh, they were exquisite. If only I could remember prices better I could tell you how much they

were, but no. Ben (Friedlander) wasn't there, but I caught up with him later. And got them both to sign the copy of their Italian Epigrams book I had hauled all the way from San Francisco. I met Ben way back when in the early days of everything, and for his magazine "Jimmy and Lucy's House of K" I wrote my first stumbling attempts to write notices of pop music. I remember writing about Janet Jackson's LP "Control," when was that? And also another article on "That's What Friends Are For" by Stevie Wonder, Dionne Warwick, etc. I think "Jimmy and Lucy" was the only magazine open to printing such work back then, and Ben the only editor who encouraged me to see what I could do critically, and I took to it and never really quit after that and thus, I owe him a huge debt of gratitude. I see now "Control" was released in 1986 and "That's What Friends Are For" in 1985, so he has been helping me for almost 20 years. Good work Ben.

Then Carla drove us back to the campus and dropped us off. It must have been during a panel session or something because the whole cafeteria was nearly deserted. Alan and I jawed on and on about everything under the sun. In his unruly mop of long curls he looked a little like Jesus Christ. He's pale too, and has a long face like an odalisque, and big dark eyes that take in the whole world with what looks like sadness but may be something else, fortitude perhaps, or hope. Whichever, he's very striking. We had a great time because I'm such a fan, to me it was like going out to lunch with, oh I don't know, John Cusack or someone. Or Dave Muller. Alan showed me pictures of his daughter Sophie, now one year old; we talked vaguely about our plans for the future.

Then we went to room 101 where, with trepidation, I manned the slide projector thinking to myself, I've seen nerds of all description do this with ease, I should be able to handle it! Alas it was not to be so, and most of Alan's beautiful slides of Philip Guston and Ben Shahn and everything else needed someone to jump over my shoulder and re-adjust the focus for me. That simple focus button had so many fingers on it by the time I was through, never was one man aided by so many Good Samaritans, but was my face red! I was never one of those A/V boys, that seems clear, but when I think of all the time I spent glued to the screen, and on Albigenianism, you'd think I'd know more about how to get light from dark.

Alan Gilbert urged us not to overlook the aesthetics of the Popular Front and the New Deal as influences in Charles Olson's work. He showed slides that began with a pretty good rundown of the graphic layout of Olson's very first book. Here I thought that book must be *Call Me Ishmael* but Gilbert showed slides of a pamphlet mass produced by the US government called "Spanish Speaking Americans in the War," a collaboration with the radical painter Ben Shahn, though signed by neither. The pages we saw were extremely striking in that stark Margaret Bourke-White way, with plenty of spiritual gung-ho from Olson. Over

the course of the 50s, Ben Shahn found his mass public draining away, and even Olson seemed to tire of him, even though he once acclaimed Olson as his favorite, miles above Motherwell, Rauschenberg and the "other little shit painters." Barrett Watten's talk on "Olson's Historicism" was just as interesting, and fit along the borders of Gilbert's talk like two spoons, based as it was on Olson viewed as a historical poet. Watten's insistence on two versions of historicism, a "historicism in" and a "historicism of" confused me at the time but as I think on it, it makes sense now. He identifies the importance to Olson's project of "an unfolding logic of prospection and substitution: as the scale of the work grows larger, there is increasing pressure on historical fact as object of desire." And again, the insistence on the unique man or woman-The "host of 'isolatoes' who refused to be absorbed by official history and tradition." What's great about Watten is that he always works on two registers at once, in this case, we could see him building a life portrait of Olson with the delicacy and detail of Singer Sargent or someone, and at the same time he was nudging our picture of Olson's thinking so we could spot its peaks and valleys over the troughs of successive postmodernisms. Everything seemed to fit into itself at the end, like Russian kachina dolls, and there was a lot of reference to China's favorite theorist Frederic Jameson. Lytle Shaw, our moderator, had hardly time to get many questions in, so we left buzzing with them. At the very end, while we were streaming out, Robert Creeley asked if he could see Alan's slide of the piece of paper, which RC said he had never seen before, in which Olson had scrawled what some say was his very last poem, "My wife my car my color and myself." (It's from the fabled Olson archive at Storrs.) The slide rose to the screen and clung there, as though about to fall precipitously. In my Gothic imagination it really did look like someone in extremis wrote it.

Hooray, that wonderful Andrew Epstein brought me a copy of my review from RAIN TAXI of my new book ISLAND OF LOST SOULS. I went back and sat in the Staar Club reading it, memorizing it. And it turned out, believe it or not, that the review was indeed written by someone I hadn't paid to write it.

We then held the candlelight march for Carl Rakosi. Because it was raining, Burt Hatlen suggested holding the "march" in one place and everyone could stand around in a sacred half-circle of sorts. I passed out the candles and lit them with Barbara Cole's lighter, or mourners tipped an unlit candle into a lit one, the wicks united in flame. The resulting spectacle was remarkably beautiful, as the gilded mirrors of the wall behind us doubled the number of candles. I watched the faces of all the people I had come to know over the past few days. Burt spoke, as did Creeley, Hejinian, Sylvester Pollet, Burt Kimmelman, Al Filreis. Each of them read a poem or two, contributed some memories. Lyn said that Amoeba Records,

in Rakosi's neighborhood here in San Francisco, would be missing an important customer, for he bought 3 or 4 CDs every day to listen to. Man, that's a lot of CDs. One woman, who had known Leah Rakosi, murmured darkly, "Where were the candles when Leah died?"

I thought of how I had bullied everyone into this memorial. But as it turned out, even the once skeptical thanked me for the follow-through. Wish you could see my photos of this event. Afterwards I had a few minutes to myself so I got out my treat, an article I had ripped out of a magazine on the plane (ELLE June issue), the article was all about Scarlet Johansson and it seemed to hint very strongly that not only did Sofia Coppola and Bill Murray freeze her out after they were done making *Lost in Translation* with her, but that none of her co-stars like her and that she's horrible. Behind her back they call her "Starlet" Johansson. I never knew that! Well it seems there are two kinds of people, one of them thinks *Lost in Translation* a great movie and Scarlet Johansson America's greatest actress, and the other group is like night and day.

Then came time for the central event of the Conference, the black tie Lobster Banquet. Indeed you didn't have to wear black tie, though many dressed up beautifully, many came as slob, and I looked like such a mess. The banquet was fun. We had a nice table with Peter Middleton, Doug Rothschild, Steve and Jennifer, Miriam, mmm, I can't remember who all else. I was just tucking into this big hearty steak thing when Aldon Nielsen came over and nabbed me. "You are busted!" he said. "You of all people shouldn't be eating steak, my friend." In his exhortations I heard a distant echo of the AA I'd escaped, but he was 100% right, having had problems with his heart too, and right on it. I pushed it away and concentrated on the entertainment, which proved to be a series of speakers (Creeley, Perelman, Perloff among others) toasting the memory of two who had been important to the National Poetry Foundation—one of them Hugh Kenner and the other Carroll Terrell, whom they all called "Terry." To be honest, "Terry" sounded like a terror and Hugh Kenner no prize either. They all acted as if writing for the *National Review* was some charming eccentricity like smoking a pipe. I heard Kenner give the Oppen Lecture here at San Francisco State one time. He gave the impression of a man slumming in San Francisco of all places. His speech was on the "Little Words" of Oppen, for he had counted how many times "a" and "the" were used in Oppen's *Collected Poems*. My experience with Carroll Terrell was more limited, and limited to the environs of Orono. They said he had asked to have a door put in between his office and that of Hatlen, to save them the labor of walking out into the hallway, and when University approval for this door wasn't forthcoming, he hired workmen to slam down the wall and carve out a door-sized shape. It was an interesting story, redolent of sex passion at its

most primitive, and perhaps borrowed from a similar story in *Our Lady of the Flowers*? Others not invited to speak said that Terry had been a gay man without a gay identity in this backwater of Maine, and that in old age he had finally approached Allen Ginsberg with a plaintive question, "How do I get to be 'gay'?" to which Allen had no answer. Remarkable was his will and indomitable his spirit. I guess my hat goes off to him but I'm like, wow, glad I didn't have to work under him, I'd be exhausted. However these two did leave behind these super works far bigger than anything I'll ever do, so what's the difference? One speaker remembered how Kenner was scandalized, for he had brought his family to the conference, at one NPF event at which an epigone of Ginsberg had stripped off his clothes suddenly. Eventually Terry had Allen apologize to Kenner for this behavior. Is it me or have you, too, been to too many memorials lately where speaker after speaker comes up with tales that make you loathe the dead? Think I first noticed this at Dan Davidson's memorial where twelve speakers in a row admitted to not being on speaking terms with him at the time of his death. Thus the word "speaker" itself finds a new meaning within itself.

Then I finally decided that, Vic or no, Queer as Folk or no, I was not going to go to the play about the Bishop-Lowell letters. That one I'm going to wait to see on the TRIO channel. Instead we went to the open cash bar at Doris Twitchell Allen Village. To our surprise, no one had shown up with any alcohol. Previously every night students would act as bartenders, very professional, with bottles of wine, etc. Lyn came in and assessed the damage. She is wonderfully practical and announced that she would go to the liquor store and buy enough booze to have our own party, so everyone gave her five dollars, ten dollars, whatever, and after gathering \$180 away she sailed in full regalia, coming back about twenty minutes later with cases of liquor, everything you could imagine, enough for a posse of clergymen loose in Atlantic City. After a few drinks the noise got out of hand. The camaraderie grew exponentially. I hadn't had a drink in many years and I realized, tonight is really going to be the acid test. Things kind of lost focus for me. I remember talking so much my mouth felt weird the next day. I suppose I felt drunk without drinking. We just kept talking and talking and pretty soon, because we were so far North I guess, the sun started to turn the night pink and then blue and yellow. I'm going to skip over this part because I can't remember all the people I talked to and listened to.

Sunday, June 27, 2004 I missed the opening panel session, thus I know I missed some very good papers, but out of curiosity I just couldn't miss the plenary session in which Theodore Enslin read from his poetry. He's a poet of whom I knew very little except that he had written hundreds of books, some of which I had glanced at with the dismissive cruelty of youth, seeing nothing there that I could

use for my own self, but now, with my new maturity, I decided to give him another try. No one from the outside world could miss Enslin's resemblance to the old fisherman in *I KNOW WHAT YOU DID LAST SUMMER*, the one with the hook on his hand and that yellow raincoat dripping with blood. I thought he was pretty spooky. The rumor was that he is secretly a multimillionaire who won a huge settlement in a class action suit, and/or that he owns the biggest cranberry bog in Maine. Reactions to his reading style were sharply divided. Was he a master of hypnotic, sensuous, telling observation, a Nadia Boulanger of the word, or was he repeating himself compulsively, like a rabbit with a hiccup? The reading went quickly and resulting in another standing ovation-the second I'd witnessed with my own two eyes during the course of five days.

Then I went to the room next door and caught a lot of the "Poets of Maine" reading. Here 14 or 15 locals poets stood up and read in a space that looked like an operating theater. Many of them took the opportunity to dedicate a poem to the now celebrated Margaret Avison, who sat right in one of the front rows with her companion, June. They thanked her for coming to Orono, which was very polite and the right thing to do. I heard all kinds of poetry and wondered to myself what it would be like to be a Maine resident, because some of the poems seemed to inspire such speculation. Some came right out and suggested Maine was really Moloch, but that I knew already from my dedication to Stephen King's novels. And some made it seem like Paradise. Burt Hatlen said to me, "Now are you going back to San Francisco to write up this conference? We expect a novel from you." I said I would try but not to expect a novel. He was just funning I know. Then I went back to Main Street to say goodbye to my two hosts who gave me directions back to the airport. For it was time for me to go.

The airport was swarming with big Marines on their way to Panama City. They crowded the sinks in the men's room, shaving and sprucing up. Several of them were distinctly bookish, huddling around the gift shop's stack of Stephen King's latest novel, while others bought out the new issue of Maxim with Anna Nicole Smith on the cover. I kept thinking, Anna Nicole! She could be your mother. Kelly Holt was on the same flight with me and we were both booked for Chicago, layover, then out to San Francisco.

We walked through the Northwest Terminal past the Isamu Noguchi sculpture and then I saw Dodie, waving at us and I was home. I got back in time to go to the funeral of the poet Christopher Hewitt, a graduate of the famous Iowa Writers Workshop, who was disabled and who rolled about San Francisco in a motorized wheelchair with a big Union Jack tacked onto it, terrorizing everyone. Lots of candles everywhere. One man got up and said, "I'd like to read a poem, by

Rudyard Kipling, that Chris loved." And he recited it from memory, a grand feat. But I'm all like, that isn't by Kipling, but I didn't know who it was by:

See how, beneath the moonbeam's smile, Yon little billow heaves its breast, And foams and sparkles for a while, Then murmuring subsides to rest!

Thus man, the sport of bliss and care, Rises on time's eventful sea, And having swelled a moment there, Thus melts into eternity.

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My corrections

05 Aug 2004

The report drew mail, some of it corrective; Kevin, always glad to be caught out, printed the retractions himself.

Hey everyone, thanks for the feedback I've gotten from my report on the recent Poetry conference in Orono, both from those who were there and those who weren't. I do have some corrections to make. Steve Shoemaker assures me that the rumors going around about Ted Enslin's secret wealth are categorically false. "He lives a very close-to-the-bone Thoreauvian life in the Maine woods, just outside a small town on the coast, and is certainly no millionaire. He did once own, and work, a small cranberry bog, but now he just has a few acres of blueberries out back and a garden." In this vein I was also unfair to Carroll ("Terry") Terrell who founded the National Poetry Foundation. Marjorie Perloff writes, "Without Terry, THERE WOULD NOT NOW BE AN ORONO conference!! The whole National Poetry Center was his brainchild; he did the whole thing on a shoestring and kept it going for years and years. He's the one who got money to bring Zukofsky and Rakosi, Creeley and Ginsberg etc. At that time, Burt [Hatlen] was a junior prof who more or less worked for Terry. Terry was pretty manic and wild and could be very difficult, as Burt pointed out, but he was also the engine behind the whole operation. And he ran the conferences brilliantly." My apologies to all I offended (and I was about to add, "and to all those I have yet to offend," but that would be Jesuitical wouldn't it).

— Kevin K.

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The eight-part dispatch was the year's great performance; after it the list settled back into its smaller weather — a query, an attribution — and Kevin settled with it.

Pound citation

01 Sep 2004

Another of his source-hunting queries, tossed to the list's collective memory.

Can someone who knows Ezra Pound's works well tell me where he said something about people who want to get 'through hell in a hurry'? If you could tell me where it is said (I expect in the Cantos prior to 1950) and what is said, I'd appreciate it.

Thanks

Kevin K.

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A Possible Attribution

24 Oct 2004

The Poetry Project Newsletter had run its obituary for Carl Rakosi unsigned. This is Kevin turning detective.

Like many of you I read and admired the obituary for Carl Rakosi that was published in the current issue of the Poetry Project Newsletter. And like many of you I was sad to see it was published anonymously. I wanted to be able to thank its author for writing such a perceptive and insightful article about Carl Rakosi, a poet who, I realized after reading the unattributed obituary, I hadn't known half as well as I thought I had. Anyhow it occurred to me that the true author shouldn't be hard to find, I could indeed call the Poetry project and try to peel away the veil of secrecy surrounding the author's identity OR through so-called 'internal evidence' I could identify him or her through subtle verbal cues, the kind which have persuaded many that Oxford wrote Shakespeare and Philip Larkin wrote all those anti-bebop letters to the editor of UK TRAD JAZZ in the 1950s. The first thing that leaped out at me was the way the author thanked Rakosi for the gift of friendship with Jen Hofer. I thought to myself, oh dear, that's not narrowing it down much, for Jen Hofer has more friends than Lindsay Lohan and Hilary Duff put together. What about the author's claim to have participated in the December 2002 tribute for Rakosi at Beyond Baroque in Venice, CA. Listen to this, "Jerome Rothenberg, Paul Vangelisti, Wanda Coleman, and I also participated along with several others." I kept thinking, if only the "several others" has been named, I'd be closer. Could it be Jen Hofer herself writing the article and seeking to keep her anonymity through confusion with several thousand of her friends? Like the purloined letter? For a few weeks my thoughts kept straying in this direction until I happened upon another sentence in the article, one I'd inexplicably overlooked earlier. "I read a Rakosi poem entitled, 'OK.'" Eureka, all I had to do was call Beyond Baroque and speak to the helpful

people there, all of whom remembered vividly the sensitive rendition of OK by the Philadelphia poet Thomas Devaney.

Therefore I say it was him! If I'm wrong, sue me,

Tom if you're on the list step forward and accept the thanks of a grateful nation.

— Kevin Killian

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2005

Book Launch on Tuesday--in San Francisco.

01 Oct 2005

Sam D'Allesandro had been one of the New Narrative's beautiful young dead — gone at thirty-one in 1988 — and Kevin had spent the better part of two decades tracking down his scattered stories. Here, at last, was the book to show for it.

Hi everyone, if you're going to be in the Bay Area this week, I'm writing to invite you to my book launch this Tuesday, October 4, at City Lights at 7:00 p.m. (San Francisco).

I'll be there, Dodie will too, and Bob Gluck, and the three of us will read briefly from the new book *Suspect Thoughts* has just put out. Come on down if you possibly can! The book is beautiful and it should be a fun event and I would really appreciate seeing you there. xxx Kevin K.

The Wild Creatures: Collected Stories of Sam D'Allesandro, edited by Kevin Killian

The Wild Creatures brings together all the stories of Sam D'Allesandro, a young voice whose life was tragically snuffed out at age 31 at the height of the AIDS epidemic in 1988. This new collection includes all of D'Allesandro's published stories (including those first collected in the out-of-print cult classic *The Zombie Pit*) as well as unpublished stories found among D'Allesandro's papers years after his death by his editor, the poet and novelist Kevin Killian, who worked with the literary estate to create this extended edition of his writing.

The Wild Creatures explores a strange terrain of urban legend, the power of sexual obsession, and the thin line where the too-cool becomes the too-hot. Sam D'Allesandro's focused, vivid writing is the stuff of legend: writing so powerful it drags the reader in by the neck.

Sam D'Allesandro, born Richard Anderson in 1956, studied at the University of California, Santa Cruz, and came to San Francisco as a youth in the early 1980s. He was handsome and charismatic, the man who'd turn your head at a hundred

yards. He began as a poet and published a book of elegant lyrics called Slippery Sins. Soon he fell in with the so-called "New Narrative" writers Robert Glück, Bruce Boone, Steve Abbott and others, and his writing took a sharp turn toward an extreme purity and poise. He reached out to other like minded writers and contacted Dennis Cooper, Kathy Acker, Benjamin Weissman, David Trinidad, and Dodie Bellamy, with whom he began an epistolary collaboration she was later to publish as *Real: The Letters of Mina Harker* and Sam D'Allesandro. At the peak of his powers, he began to feel ill. He died of AIDS in 1988, leaving behind a brilliant body of work that ranges from stories of one paragraph only to fully developed novellas.

"For years I've scoured used book stores for copies of Sam D'Allesandro's work, buying up what I could find and passing it on to friends with the injunction: Read this. *The Wild Creatures* is more than the resuscitation of a brilliant, out-of-print writer. It's that rarest of things: a true literary event."

-K.M. Soehnlein, author of *You Can Say You Knew Me When*

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Between this and the year's end the record thinned to almost nothing, as it would through these late years; Kevin was writing less to the list now, and more to the world beyond it.

Re: Ahadada @ Beyond Baroque, December 17th

14 Dec 2005

The list had been sent a flyer for a Los Angeles reading, and one member fastened on a name he liked the sound of. Kevin was the kind of man who always knew whether the name delivered.

Bruna Mori is indeed as cool as her name, no, cooler. She is greatly talented, highly educated, chic and smart. She's a good writer to boot. I think you'll like her, Ray.

Kevin K.

Original Message: -----

Please tell me that Bruna Mori is as cool as her name!??!!!!

Behalf Of Daniel Sendeki

Hi Buffsters!

One last reminder before this weekend! Jerome Rothenberg, Jesse Glass, Cathy Daly, Bruna Mori and I will be reading at Beyond Baroque in Venice, California on December 17, 2005. Readings will kick off at 7:30 to be followed by a tribute to Cid Corman at 9:00; for this portion of the event feel free to bring Corman correspondence, books, or magazines from which to read and share and celebrate. All welcome.

Beyond Baroque, 681 Venice Blvd., Venice, \$7/\$5/members free, 7:30 & 9:00

Some proceeds from this event will be donated to Cid's wife, Shizumi, and be used to defray the cost of a plot and memorial for Cid.

Beyond Baroque has ordered some really cool Corman books and ephemera which will be available.

I for one, am really lookin' forward to hitting the Left Coast! I'll be in the Los Angeles area until the 23rd — so if you know of any good events to check out, want to grab some lunch, or chat, backchannel me!

For more information:

Beyond Baroque Literary Arts Calendar <http://www.beyondbaroque.org/>

Ahadada Books <http://www.ahadadabooks.com/>

Contact us: <http://www.sendeck.com/ahadada/contact/>

17 December, Saturday - 7:30 PM

AHADADA BOOKS Presents

*Join the writers and poets of Ahadada Books from the US, Canada, and Japan. JESSE GLASS has been anthologized most recently in *Visiting Walt* (Iowa); a selected poems is forthcoming from West House. CATHERINE DALY's books include *Locket* (Tupelo) and *DaDaDa* (Salt) and an upcoming Ahadada chapbook. BRUNA MORI's New York cityscape poems, with ink paintings by Matthew Kinney, is forthcoming from Meritage. She's appeared in *Fence*, *ZYZZYVA*, *Trepan*, and has a chapbook forthcoming from Ahadada. DANIEL SENDECKI's *Strange Currencies* came out from Ahadada in 2003. He is working on a long poem inspired by George Oppen's "Of Being Numerous." JEROME ROTHENBERG is author of over seventy books of poetry including *Poems for the Game of Silence*, *Poland/1931*, *A Seneca Journal*, *Vienna Blood*, *That Dada Strain*, *New Selected Poems 1970-1985*, *Khurbn*, and recently, *A Paradise of Poets* and *A Book of Witness* (all New Directions) and a forthcoming chapbook from Ahadada.*

17 December, Saturday - 9:00 PM

CID CORMAN TRIBUTE and MEMORIAL

*The legendary poet, translator, and editor CID CORMAN (b. 1924) passed away on March 12, 2004. Join JEROME ROTHENBERG and Ahadada Press in a tribute to this key figure in American poetry of the second half of the 20th century. Corman published more than 100 books and pamphlets and edited the influential literary journal *Origin*, among others. In 1990, his two vol. selected poems *OF* ran to some 1500 poems; Volume 3 appeared in 1998. With Ahadada authors. Bring Corman correspondence, books, or magazines from which to read and share and celebrate. All welcome.*

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A Podcast with Me On It

08 Jan 2006

A few months on from the book, and Kevin was still keeping company with his dead — a Bay Area station had asked him in to read Sam D'Allesandro aloud, and to broadcast it to anyone who would listen.

Hey everybody, check it out, finally a pod cast worth listening to, with me on it!

<http://www.kqed.org/topics/arts/writersblock/0601-killian.jsp>

On this tape I read aloud the words of my late friend, Sam D'Allesandro, whose collected stories I have edited eighteen years after his death! Unbelievable how time goes by so fast, and thinking of him, Sam, so young when he died, only 31, he would be nearly 50 today. Anyhow this is one of his best stories and a local public radio station had me come in, read it, and they said they would make it available for anyone to listen to. Hopefully you will like what you here and then go and take a look at his book, which I have called, THE WILD CREATURES. which you can find, well at SPD, or Amazon, or wherever. It's a steal. He was the greatest. Well, if not the greatest, he was anyhow insanely cute. And a terrific writer, as you will see.

Thanks

Kevin K.

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Re: A Candle for who?

16 Mar 2006

The list was arguing about whose deaths a culture agrees to mourn; Rachel Corrie, the young American crushed by an army bulldozer in Gaza in 2003, had been set beside the murdered Laci Peterson, and the comparison sat badly in the room.

Primeau, did you know Laci Peterson? Or do you just throw around her name, "Laci," as if to prove your own point that in "our culture" women's lives are just thrown away and if we care at all we are told that we are "overly sympathetic and concerned" with them?

In this case, I expect it's a little of both.

I'm with Frank Sherlock on this one. What's wrong with respect?

— Kevin Killian

Original Message: -----

Note: I didn't mean to equate the coverage of Corrie's death with the media circus that was the Peterson case. I only brought up Laci to point out that, as a culture, we tend to be overly sympathetic and concerned with characters who fit certain molds.

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What We Saw at the Weldon Kees Retrospective

12 Jun 2006

Weldon Kees — poet, painter, jazzman — drove toward the Golden Gate Bridge in July 1955 and was never seen again, leaving a scatter of fugitive films almost no one had gathered. Jenni Olson finally did, and Kevin, who wrote his best after a good night out, went to see.

Was anyone on the list at the Weldon Kees event last night at the Cinematheque here in San Francisco? Last year guest curator Jenni Olson turned an elegaic tribute to a dead friend, Mark Finch, into a feature documentary called THE JOY OF LIFE, which spoke in a spare and moving way about people drawn to the Golden Gate Bridge, like Finch, to take their own lives. In the course of her research, she said, she came across the life, work and of course the disappearance of Weldon Kees, whose car was found on the north end of the bridge on July 18, 1955, and that she became taken with Kees' work as both poet and filmmaker in the early San Francisco film avant-garde. (Not much mention made of his painting.) Perhaps only Jenni Olson, with her myriad connections to a hundred archives, could have pulled together such a program, which was billed as the first retrospective of Kees' fugitive film work.

Since he completed only one film, the program was supplemented by other shorts on which he had contribute his many talents. James Broughton's classic ADVENTURES OF JIMMY (1950) began the show, a nice print with Kees barrelhouse piano score. Broughton was in full Buster Keaton-Chaplin mode with this short, in which he leaves a rundown cabin in the wilderness and goes to San Francisco to find a wife, or possibly a boyfriend, or one of each perhaps. It's crazy coy, and Broughton's not a great silent film actor, but it's cute and the audience lapped it up. Olson followed this up with two of Weldon Kees' so-called "data" films, both from 1952, HAND MOUTH COORDINATION and APPROACHES AND LEAVETAKINGS, also silent, in grainy black and white. Frankly, these left me a little mystified. Why on earth where they made? In HMC, we watch a harried mother go through an entire day taking care of an adorable little boy who looks to be about 15 months old-feeding him, bathing him, putting on his diapers, while four older kids look on from the background and attempt to steal scenes from Baby. Kees and Gregory Bateson are sometimes shown in the corners of the apartment, cameras held up to their faces. But why? The second "anthropological film" was lensed by Kees with a camera hidden in his valise, and documents ordinary Oakland and Berkeley citizens saying hello and goodbye. Kees (presumably) supplies some winsome captions for each brief scenelet, some of them lasting but a few seconds. In one of the scenes, laid in front of UC

Berkeley's Wheeler Hall, an imposing professor walks across some steps with a brace of burly grad students, and a sharp-eyed member of our audience identified the faculty guy as George M. Stewart, the novelist (STORM) and author of the classic work on California's Loyalty Oath THE YEAR OF THE OATH (1950).

HOTEL APEX was screened next, the only completed film Kees signed, a fascinating and beautiful poetic impression of a rundown boarding house badly in need of demolition. The camera glides and rises through the ruined space, stopping to dolly in here and there at odd-shaped remnants, a Dinah Washington poster, a scattering of beer caps, a soaked paperback copy of Phoebe Atwood Taylor's 1931 THE CAPE COD MYSTERY. We wonder about the people who once lived there, how they came to tun out on their old possessions; the HOTEL APEX has some of the mystery of the Marie Celeste. Time heals everything, folks say, but the displacement of the hotel remains, still, eerily vigorous, nearly a shriek.

Then we saw a color film, William Heick's THE BRIDGE, on which Kees acted as a cameraman. Bizarrely it's a series of impressive Wow! shots of the Golden Gate Bridge, swamped in fog, glittering in the sun, viewed from a bird's-eye view above, sometimes from the great steel pilings at its base, while a "movie voice" from the period recites, really skips through, what seems like a LOT of Hart Crane's poem THE BRIDGE. We see Kees scurrying down a steep slope balancing a tripod; it's spooky, the way he seems to risk tumbling into the rough white surf. I thought Crane's verse really beautiful, but you could tell some people were having a hard time following it, especially the way it was enunciated, in these rapidfire "You Are There" rapidfire sub-Gielgudisms. Finally the lights came halfway up and we listened to a KPFA broadcast of Weldon Kees' own radio show, which he co-hosted with a friend Michael Grieg. This episode was recorded shortly after Kees' disappearance, and Grieg puzzles it out over the air, playing a song ("Daybreak Blues") that Kees wrote, and reading one of Kees' longer, most interesting poems, "The Journey." Grieg's got a great voice, like Vincent Price crossed with sandpaper, and he made "The Journey" sound like a million bucks (funny thing, though, he pronounces "Formica" with a strange accent on the first syllable, as though along the lines of "fornicate.") And the grief and bewilderment of Kees' suicide was palpable in this longago radio show from KPFA. Very touching. I came away from this retrsopective thinking that, despite Dana Gioia, despite Donald Justice, whatever, Weldon Kees deserves all the scrutiny and commentary hes been getting. Maybe he wasnt the worlds greatest filmmaker, but we have only these bits and pieces to ponder, like reading fortunes from tea leaves. Anything might have happened, and nearly did.

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The summer's housekeeping done, the list dropped from view for a season; when Kevin turned back to it in the fall the weather had changed, and there were quarrels and a loss waiting.

Re: POETS IN NEED

07 Nov 2006

Poets in Need — Michael Rothenberg's mutual-aid fund for poets in a fix — had asked the list to help spread the word, and one member read its eligibility rules as a cold shoulder to the young and the unarrived.

Jason, it seems that you are making a gesture of solidarity on behalf of young people who might not qualify for Poets in Need benefits.

That's admirable, and I agree that something should be done for the young people. But what? If you are serious about forming a young person's Poets in Need sort of group, that would administer charity to those who have not yet reached middle aged, let me know. You might call it "Junior Poets in Need"— J-PIN?

I urge you not to divert your donations to the Salvation Army or United Way, but keep with your original impulse and earmark them for J-PIN. How much were you planning to give the Salvation Army and United Way anyhow, if that's not too impertinent? How would you know that they those large impersonal organizations had funneled your contributions to the young?

Kevin Killian

this kind of self-serving pseudo-good heartedness makes me really angry. From the website: "Poets in need is a non-profit organization founded in 2000 providing emergency assistance to poets who have an established presence in the literary community as innovators in the field and a substantive body of work." that strikes me as saying if you're really needy, and not the kind of person who can pull down a cushy teaching job at some sleepy liberal arts college, or make a couple of grand here and there doing speaking engagements, or charge 15-20 bucks a copy for hard cover versions of your books, PIN doesn't give a damn how much you need help, because you don't deserve theirs. More importantly, such criteria for assistance effectively limits beneficiaries to people who are middle aged or older and college educated. In other words, the members of our society who really ought to be expected to be able to take care of themselves. Never mind what happens if Michael Rothenberg and co. don't happen to consider your work innovative. What a bunch of bullshit. I'll send my donations to the salvation army or the united way, thanks. On Tue, 7 Nov 2006, Vernon Frazer wrote: Michael Rothenberg is looking for people who would be willing to post a Poets In Need button on their websites or blogs. Interested people can link the button at <http://www.poetsinneed.org> <<http://www.poetsinneed.org/>> . Mark Young at Otoliths, [REDACTED], has offered to give people tips on how to link it if they are not sure how to do it. David Meltzer, a recipient of a PIN Grant writes: "This remarkable & real utopian organization of mutual aid bailed me out of a cold-

sweat fiscal crisis. I'll always be grateful as well as a confirmed advocate of this kind of communitarian support & good will." More information on PIN can be found at the PIN website: <http://www.poetsinneed.org> <<http://www.poetsinneed.org/>> .. The site is still in development.

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Re: Tragic news -- kari edwards

03 Dec 2006

kari edwards — the genderqueer poet who had spent a happy year in the Auroville community in southern India — died suddenly that December, and the list was still reeling.

Yes, it's true about kari's death and here in the Bay Area we are all still in shock as I imagine her friends all over the country and elsewhere are as well.

Fran Blau asked me to spread the word about, well, something you can do in kari's memory if you care to, and that's to make a donation to Cinema Paradiso, the international cinema in Auroville, the visionary community in southern India where kari and Fran had spent a happy year + together.

Checks should be made out to: Auroville Maintenance Fund and sent to: Financial Services Town Hall Annex Auroville 605101 Tamil Nadu India

Please note that it's to support "Cinema Paradiso" and that your gift is in memory of kari edwards.

Thanks everyone. If anyone needs an update or whatever feel free to get in touch with me,

Kevin K.

This is deafening indeed. I'm in shock. Please let us know any news. Sina This is deafening news received far too soon. My condolences to all who knew her and her work. -----Cheap Talk? Check out Yahoo! Messenger's low PC-to-Phone call rates. — Sina Queyras Visiting Assistant Professor Department of English Woodside Cottage Haverford College 370 Lancaster Avenue Haverford, PA 19041-1392 [REDACTED]

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2007

Will any of you be at Art Basel next week?

07 Jun 2007

By now Kevin had found his way into the art world proper; Art Basel had him reading poetry at the fair each afternoon, and, an ocean from home, he wanted to know who else from the list might turn up in Switzerland.

I will—and I know Barry Schwabsky will be too—but if there is anyone else on the Poetics List going it would be fun to meet up. I'll be reading poetry there every day of the fair from 12:30 to 2 (and on Friday to 3), so these will be marathon sessions for me and I need your cooperation. We will be putting on plays from the San Francisco Poets Theater, and there will be continual showings of a new video profile of me, compiled by Matthew Hughes Boyko, called "Kevin Killian In the Light" (after the old Led Zep track). Let me know if I might enlist you too, thanks everyone,

By the Way George Bowering, this is in Switzerland, love from

Kevin K.

Art 38 Basel New: «Plenty of Liberties» A Lounge by and for Artists Art Basel is launching a new «Artist Lounge» this year. It is designed by the distinguished Städelschule in Frankfurt am Main, which was invited to create a place by and for artists at the international art show. A program of music, lectures, and discussions showcasing artists and creative personalities from Europe and North America will be staged there daily (June 12 through 17) from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. The «Artist Lounge» is located in the foyer on the 1st floor of the «Art Unlimited» hall. The lounge is open to the public. Admission is free.

«Plenty of Liberties»: This slogan by American artist Raymond Pettibon, which is emblazoned on a wall of the cafeteria of the Städelschule (Frankfurt am Main), also serves as the motto for the «Artist Lounge». Under the guidance of Daniel Birnbaum (Director of the Städelschule, Portikus) and artist Mark Leckey, students including David Catherall, Michele Di Menna, Kristoffer Frick, Hanna Hildebrand, Maria Loboda, and Bernhard Schreiner have turned the 350m2 space into an extraordinary lounge featuring the «Golden Rausch Bar» and the elegant «Cake» café, with its daily offer of delicious Danish cakes and fresh pastries from Berlin. The students describe the lounge as follows:

«Delicate, glittering, crystalline structures in combination with raw, untreated wood; luxuriant plants, loud music, and flickering colored light seem to fill the room. That is the «Artist Lounge, and we have taken plenty of liberties». They go on to say: «Music, knowledge, and the irrational are presented by means of performances, lectures, presentations, and films by a host of creative personalities. We have a few surprises in store. Spontaneous encounters are extremely welcome.»

The roster of participants appearing from 5 to 7 p.m., Monday, June 11, through Sunday, June 17, includes: Bernhard Schreiner, artist, musician (Austria, Germany), Kevin Killian, author, poet, performer (San Francisco), Man Like Me, musician (London), Jeremy Shaw (M21, Circlesquare), artist, musician (Vancouver), Carl Michael von Hausswolff, artist, composer, curator (Stockholm), Alexander Overwijk, professor and World Freehand Circle Drawing Champion (Ottawa), Ching Chong Song, musician (New York), Demons (Alivia Zivich and Nate Young), artists, performers, and musicians (Detroit), ILIOS, musician, composer, artist (Greece, Spain), Reiner Höhndorf, energy theoretician (Schwiern), Jacob Holdt, world traveler, performer, activist, documentalist (Copenhagen), Steven Connor, professor, researcher, lecturer (London), Kevin Blechdom, musician (San Francisco), and Nick Bullen, artist, musician (Birmingham). Further well-known artists will be at the «Artist Lounge» as special guests every day. The final program (see also <http://www.art.ch/go/id/elc/>) will be available at the info desks.

PR /Artist Lounge/May 2007 Media information on Art Basel is available from: Art Basel, Communications, Peter Vetsch, Marlen Melone, or Nathalie Riggenschach, CH-4005 Basel, Tel. +41/58-200 20 20, Fax +41/58-206 31 30, <mailto: [REDACTED]>.

<<http://www.artbasel.com/>>www.ArtBasel.com For the UK: Brunswick Arts, 16 Lincoln's Inn Fields, UK-London WC 2A 3ED, Tel. +44/20-7936 1290, Fax +44/20-7936 1299, <mailto: [REDACTED]>

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John Wieners, A BOOK OF PROPHECIES

11 Jul 2007

John Wieners belonged to the Boston wing of the New American Poetry, a heartbreak lyricist in the Olson-Creeley orbit whose later work slid gorgeously off its own rails; a notebook of his from around 1970 had lately surfaced and been printed for the first time. Kevin, the tireless Amazon reviewer, carried his notice home to the list.

I posted this at the Amazon site but thought I should post it here as well, just trying to get the word out on an amazing "new" book.

Excuse the cross posting (is that what that means????)

I think even those of us who love John Wieners' poetry have been taken aback, in fact bowled over by the greatness of his hitherto unknown BOOK OF PROPHECIES, written in the 1969-1971 period right after NERVES and preceding BEHIND THE STATE CAPITOL OR CINCINNATI PIKE, but whatever, we're all happy now. Halfway through the book you can trace the mark, so obvious it feels like an actual physical thing, perhaps a torso in marble missing an arm or two, where Wieners must have decided that the lyric style of NERVES, ASYLUM POEMS, etc., just wasn't going to cut it for him any more and it was time to move onto the "derangements" of his later style, the accent on language's materiality, the "cut up" effects, the slide into a slippery first person multiplicity. It's fascinating just from a biographical point of view, and in effect what you get is a whole mini-anthology of two very different strains in Wieners' writing, and this BOOK OF PROPHECIES provides wonderful example of both styles.

The other night there was a launch for this book at New College here in San Francisco, and as reader after reader took the stage to read from this book, we were struck by how many of these poems, which we had never heard before, had the force and the "click" of what amounts to instant classics. They were new to us, and yet we felt we had known them forever. As it happens, a few poems will be already familiar to you from this book, as Wieners published them separately or in magazines and they wound up in the old Black Sparrow SELECTED POEMS, only now in their full context they make sense, and accrue a patina or lustre of richness which they lacked before, appealing as they were in their abandoned state.

The book itself is physically beautiful, and the young Boston-based poet Michael Carr has done a fantastic service by providing this transcription of a "lost" Wieners notebook—replete with some scans of the actual holograph—with a fine sensitivity to Wieners' variegated methods of punctuation, spelling, line break, revision, and so forth. (At the end of 1991 the notebook itself was bought by Kent State Special Collections in Ohio, where Carr "discovered" it.) The poet Jim Dunn, who was close to Wieners in the final years of JW's life, has written an introduction that might be a model for this sort of thing, a memoir and an appreciation in one, in which he doesn't seek to shield the reader from the immense difficulties of reading Wieners, nor does he romanticize Wieners' psychological and physical ruin.

"I died no one/ as I once felt I had/ to be someone." He is the poet oh heartbreak, and the shadow figure enslaved by the more vigorous and together figures in his

life, like Olson or Creeley, feeling himself hardly human in his pale remnants of a life. Both shamed and inspired, as well, by the superhuman, glamorous Hollywood actresses and female artists he had glimpsed on screen, or met in "real life," from Jean Seberg and Barbara Stanwyck to nico and Nell Rice, Grace Hartigan and Phyllis Webb. A BOOK OF PROPHECIES begins, eerily enough, with the single poem, "2007," a Blakean, ecstatic prediction of a moment tragically removed from our own, his vision of Aquarius in "full flowers" and "music string and forms of verse controlled symbolism." The poems don't always work, and a couple of them dangle sadly into a ludic space, but the best of them are among the greatest poems Wieners ever wrote, and that's saying something. At the launch I read "Sexual Despair," nearly made myself cry out loud with repressed longing and hardcore sex tension. "I need you, my little son/ / to be beside me in bed/ jerking your meat and/ smoking hash-hish/ /What will the future bring/ this fear ling-/ ers every day." Well, as you can see, all I am saying is, this is a signal event for poetry and a rare opportunity to re-assess the work of an authentic lyric genius.

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Summer went quiet after the Wieners notice; when September came it came all at once — a play of his own, a festival show he adored, and a benefit reading he would write up as tenderly as anything that year.

If you're in San Francisco on September 7

03 Sep 2007

The San Francisco Poets Theater ran on cheerful genius and a cast of nearly everyone Kevin knew; this was his newest, made with Karla Milosevich as a benefit for Small Press Traffic, the center he had long helped keep alive.

I hope you can come to see my new play, which I wrote with the video artist Karla Milosevich.

WEe are putting it on as a benefit for Small Press Traffic Literary Arts Center and it will be staged one night only, Friday the 7th, at 7:30 p.m. at CCA, California College of the Arts (Timken Hall auditorium), 1111 Eighth Street.

Basically it's all about apodyopsis. Do we only know about apodyopsis in California? Then read on!

KEVIN KILLIAN AND KARLA MILOSEVICH CELEBRITY HOSPITAL

Apodyopsis—the act or condition of sexual excitement caused by exposure to medical procedures. To protect the privacy of his clientele at Celebrity Hospital in LA, top surgeon Dr. Tim Baldwin admits only famous people. Even the doctors and nurses are (or were) celebrities of a sort. It's another typical day at Celebrity Hospital, as everyone from Courtney Love to Kurt Russell and Diana Ross is

having work done, and ingenue Scarlett Johansson, avoiding stalker Woody Allen, spends a day in the ward observing and nursing in preparation for her new role in the new Oliver Stone film about nurse politics. Then Dr. Baldwin and his staff are confronted by two grave ills, the eco-terrorists known as the Cult of the Black Feather, who demand universal facelifts for the poor and oppressed, and by a strange apparitions haunting the hallways and linen closets of Celebrity Hospital, that looks like a werewolf and seems to be after Hollywood's greatest and most ageless stars, most of whom suffer from apodyopsis, they never really experience sexual feeling unless they're having unnecessary medical procedures. Celebrity Hospital features a cast of Bay Area poets, painters, video and filmmakers, cartoonists, theorists, novelists sculptors and curators including Dodie Bellamy, Matthew Hughes Boyko, David Brazil, Norma Cole, Gerald Corbin, Kate Fowle, Craig Goodman, Cliff Hengst, Scott Hewicker, Colter Jacobsen, Kevin Killian, Mac McGinnes, Anne McGuire, Karla Milosevich, Tanya Milosevich, Chuck Mobley, Rex Ray, Laurie Reid, Lisa Robertson, Jocelyn Saidenberg, Leslie Shows, Wayne Smith, and Ryan Thayer. And from Madison, Wisconsin, a special appearance by the Prince Myshkins (Rick Burkhardt and Andy Gricevich). In one way or another the San Francisco Poet's Theater has been around for decades. Killian and Milosevich have collaborated on two previous plays, *Love Can Build a Bridge* (2003) and *The Red and the Green* (2005).

If any of you can find You Tube then you can view a pair of coming attractions for our play:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=do1BvtzCE-4>

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=syf9zn_c1l8

Check it out! Thanks for your time,

Kevin Killian

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If you're in San Francisco, and want to see something fantastic,

09 Sep 2007

Two days after his own opening, Kevin was back in the audience and playing press agent again — this time for the Prince Myshkins, a Madison agitprop troupe built around the poets Rick Burkhardt and Andy Gricevich, at the San Francisco Fringe. Enthusiasm was always his native key.

Hi there, it's me, Kevin Killian, playing press agent again! I just came back from a really good show here in San Francisco and I want to urge my readers to go and see it. It's part of the San Francisco Fringe Festival and it's performed by the Prince Myshkins, a theater troupe from Madison, Wisconsin, and SF has three more chances to see it.

The play is really two plays in one, "Great Hymn of Thanksgiving" and then, without a break, there's one called "Conversation Storm," like Operation Desert Storm I guess, mixed with a little of My Dinner with Andre. The Prince Myshkins I sort of knew, for I had met one of them, the poet Rick Burkhardt, down in San Diego when he was a student of Rae Armantrout's—now he's a Ph.D and very august. Then there is Andy Gricevich, who I have met more recently, also a poet—the two of them both crazy talented and very much into the same sorts of things that occupy my mind, one of them being how to turn avant-garde energies into agitprop artwork, especially at this time of peril in our republic. Well, I don't know how to do it, —but they do. There's a third fellow in the troupe who is really cute, sort of a cute version of oh, Vincent D'Onofrio and/or Joss Whedon, maybe a little Ryan Reynolds, in other words, he will make a fanboy out of you believe me. His name is Ryan Higgins and he is apparently an actor and a musician according to the program, but I say, file him under: revelation.

"Great Hymn on Thanksgiving" is the more ostensibly "artsy" of the two playlets, the three men gather around a family dinner table and eat with exaggerated movements of their knives and forks, eating invisible food and muttering murky syllables into the business end of cowbells, which cover their mouths like bedpans. Little by little the repetitive scrape of a knife across a china plate, the movement of a spoon across a tablecloth, a finger around the rim of a water glass, turns into a symphony of Spike Jones like sounds. It's like something out of those old leaked Beach Boys "Smile" sessions. They're also drumming the table like toddlers and playing or banging diverse toy instruments: a toy piano for Ryan, a toy steel drum for Rick, while Andy plows a violin bow across an old time zither or autoharp. The program notes that the muttered sounds come from, among other sources, the poems of Rae Armantrout. No! Yes! No! I didn't hear any, but there were so many things to hear, and all of the actors pretty deadpan, like Ish Kabibble in the old Kay Kyser RKO musicals.

In "Conversation Storm" the subject becomes more obviously about torture as two men, old high school antagonists, meet up 20 years later with still the same subject positions (liberal vs. conservative) but with a new openness to torture that has removed it from secrecy, and now it's open US defense policy thanks to TV shows like 24 and thanks to the so called "torture memo" from the US Attorney General's office authored in summer 2002 by Bybee and Woo, both of them pilloried in "Conversation Storm." Gricevich plays several parts, a bored waiter trying to 86 the argusome pair, and a third classmate who remembers his high school days as an era of unchecked masturbation. The back and forth between Higgins and Burkhardt has to be seen to be believed, or maybe you could hear it on the BBC radio channel, for they have mastered the art of sarcastic and

haunting timing. It was like, do you remember Nichols and May? This was like, Nichols, Nichols, and more Nichols. If you can possibly see any of their remaining performances you will be seared like ahi tuna. I give the show my highest rating: go, go, go! (And so cheap, under ten dollars. The only drawback: not enough nudity.) You can get more info about the show at,

<http://www.sffringe.org/fringe07/07plays/great.html>

Tell them Kevin Killian sent you.

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Blaser reading in San Francisco last Sunday

17 Sep 2007

Robin Blaser — the last of the Berkeley Renaissance beside Spicer and Duncan — was eighty-two and freshly reissued by California, The Holy Forest and The Fire both new on the table, when he read for San Francisco State's Poetry Center. Kevin went, as he went to everything, and stayed to marvel.

Sunday September 16 was the benefit for San Francisco State's august Poetry Center and featured Robin Blaser at Knuth Hall in the Creative Arts Building, rather a utilitarian auditorium well dressed by Steve Dickison and staff to give a feeling of warmth, even sumptuousness, and a vase on the floor startling with tall sunflowers. Blaser avoided the podium and sat with his material well marked in hand, in an orange jacket that picked up something of that eerie sunflower light.

Being 82 hasn't taken away much of Blaser's glamor or erudition, and he has always known how to switch up in the middle of a reading between the heights of cosmogony and a low, earthy humor like Sophie Tucker, and thus it was last night. He came partly to celebrate the new editions of his poems (THE HOLY FOREST) and essays (THE FIRE), and his reading ranged widely—he announced that he was happy to hear that new editions of the collected poems of Robert Duncan and Jack Spicer are on their way—

It was a thrill to hear Blaser read the “Great Companions: Robert Duncan” and also the letter “to Robin” that’s in Spicer’s “Admonitions.” (And three poems by Spicer, including 2 from “15 False Propositions Against God.” Then we got to hear maybe half an hour's worth of his own work, new and old; and when I say “new,” there are apparently fourteen poems written within the past 10 months, and the ones we heard were crackerjack.

Many of the usual suspects were there, including Michael McClure, Michael Palmer, Norma Cole, Bob Gluck, Fran Herndon, David and Hilde Burton, Christopher Wagstaff, Ariel Parkinson, Mark Linenthal, dozens more—I got to meet Ken Bullock who was responsible for the super profile slash interview that had appeared in the Berkeley Daily Planet last week—and to which Ron Silliman

linked on his blog. Lots of the gang from UC Press, who put out both THE FIRE and THE HOLY FOREST (forgive the Billy Joel like pun!) but also tons of young people which was so nice to see. Michael Smoler and Marcus had driven up from LA to be there at this event—and rousing rounds of applause which gratified Blaser—you could tell—to the point of tears, this crazy loud applause which I hadn't heard since I used to see Callas lecture at Juilliard in the early 70s. Made me feel quite an old hand it did! But afterwards I told Dodie I was convinced that this was not the last time we'd see Robin, far from it, he seems wonderfully fit and he'll be around for many years—don't ask me how I know—I flunked out of medical school—and I was only psychic one time—but come back to me in 10 years and you'll see, he'll still be stumping the States.

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2008

Two new books from Krupskaya

10 Mar 2008

Krupskaya was the small San Francisco press he helped edit, and in his hands the mere announcement of a book became an act of advocacy — he could not send two poets into the world without half-composing their welcome himself.

I'm pleased to announce two new books from Krupskaya Press, one by George Albon, one by Colin Smith.

They're available through Small Press Distribution. I know you will enjoy them, just give them a chance!

Kevin Killian (San Francisco)

TITLE 1: Momentary Songs George Albon ISBN 978-1-92865-027-0 \$14 94 pages perfect bound

A moment is an inside flutter, a reflection, a civil relapse. George Albon's Momentary Songs sound the possibilities of forwardness and hope in a surrounding twilight of unprecedented venality. Using a variety of registers—lyrical inquiry, Blakean exhortation, the satirical spiel of Morgenstern's Gallows Songs—they search for alternative states (public ones, affective ones) as well as offer a probe on what has come to pass: "In this eclipse are we the inclement for placing it?"

A reading pole can also be a door, a tree trunk, the wall of a barn. It's the itinerant's edge-of-town bulletin board, where shared message-symbols are drawn and heeded: Good town, bad town, okay place to stay, don't stop here. The

poems of Reading Pole both comment on and embody the heart of these messages: quick news on the open-ended route.

In Dorothea Tanning's *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*, an enormous sunflower lays across an upper floor landing. A pubescent girl with undone blouse leans against the landing's wall, enduring an experience, or savoring one. Another girl, her back to the viewer, looks down the hallway, her long tresses freed from gravity and tendriling toward the ceiling. Sunflowers will do that.

Seven Admissions offer variations on a name, and revel in the world between the letters. Inspired by Frank O'Hara's crostic-poems to Edwin Denby, these admissions are playful and austere by turns, but always putting forth Eros as challenge to the death-making predicates of the title sequence.

Of Momentary Songs, Rodney Koeneké writes:

"Avuncular spotted drones," be warned. Not since Guston did Nixon has the resource of art been turned on the throne with such hopeful scurrility. Albon's Momentary Songs are hymns for the unchurched "pioneers/of the bottom edge," who know "midnights are false" and want back their stars. I'm taking my news from the other George: resistance isn't futile, it's the "sunlight is information" age and Minerva's owl sings "coup due." Rodney Koeneké

And here is Taylor Brady weighing in: One might echo Walter Benjamin on Karl Kraus: "The very term 'public opinion' outrages him. Opinions are a private matter. The public has an interest only in judgments." The title sequence of Albon's tough and tensile new collection, *Momentary Songs*, might surprise readers accustomed to the quiet, deliberate insistence with which his work has gathered itself into place over the years. This is an Albon committed to the clamor of a public occasion, revealing how large has been the imagination guiding his work all along, had we only listened. Albon takes up Kraus's struggle (minus, thankfully, its flirtation with reaction) within a horizon of "opinion" immeasurably broadened, as our current machines of public chatter threaten to level discourse as a whole into information, and pulverize that information into noise. Not content to retreat from this scene into the contemplative chambers in which the business of our politics consoles itself, neither do these lyrics adopt the fashionable stance which would hope to overcome the stultifying noise by amplifying it back to itself in a feedback loop of hip futility. What's at work—and what works—here, is a granular method locating edges of articulation among the turns of phrase of our shared unconsciousness, recovering Albon's larger project of the deliberate by bringing words to their moment of deliberation—often in startling outbursts of rhyme, in which are felt a deep historical current of poetry as that which refuses simply to inform, but must sound. Kraus: "How noisy

everything grows." Albon: "But that was not a document, just a temporary air disturbance."

[About the Author]

George Albon is the author of *Empire Life* (Littoral Books), *Thousands Count Out Loud* (lyric& press), *Brief Capital of Disturbances* (Omnidawn), and *Step* (The Post-Apollo Press). Chapbooks include *King* (Meow Press), *Transit Rock* (Duration Press), and *Reading Pole* (Seeing Eye Books). His work has appeared in *Hambone*, *New American Writing*, *O Anthology* 4, *Avec Sampler* 1, *The New Review of Literature*, and the anthologies *The Gertrude Stein Awards in Innovative American Poetry*, *Bay Poetics*, and *Blood and Tears: Poems for Matthew Shepard*. His essay "The Paradise of Meaning" was the George Oppen Memorial Lecture for 2002. He lives and works in San Francisco.

TITLE 2: 8x8x7 Colin Smith ISBN 978-1-92865-028-7 \$14 89 pages perfect bound

8 x 8 x 7 finds the Winnipeg-based poet Colin Smith in panopticon mode, his eye everywhere, glittering and shifting planes like a human kaleidoscope. Even those who have followed Smith's career since his term in Vancouver's estimable Kootenay School of Writing, and his previous book *Multiple Poses* (Tsunami Editions, 1997) may not be prepared for the intensity of feeling now so thoroughly mashed up with his vaunted multiplicity. After a blistering, acid-laced opening salvo, ironically titled "Just," Smith builds up the attack through a series of escalating feints and rhapsodies. His targets include war, unemployment, sexual category, the talking heads of TV and continental philosophy, outsourcing, liberal piety and, most touchingly, his own body, once a source of comfort and strength, now a font of lacerating pain. No two poems in his book are alike, but they surround an uncommon fire. After a touching finale, "Codicil," a sort of coda, "Goodbye (Riddance)," puts us right back on the block again. What is 8 x 8 x 7 anyhow? At first you might think it's a toaster; now then maybe not. You're in this condition of doubt recommended by the poet, whose title poem points to a place from which we might retrace our misguided steps: "'I don't know' is a good start."

Of 8 x 8 x 7, Donato Mancini has this to say: Colin Smith is in curious pain, and he wants to know the source. So he feels around for clues with his mother-tongue baby id in the "sharps" dumpster of language, disenjoying the plenitude of positive results. There's always already an avalanche of data, as any ingenious cottage linguist pointing to social relations as materialized in language will show-not-tell you. Colin is "subject to," like every other thumbsucker, but doesn't mistakenly think God/Dad or the ghosts have it out for him. Why would a statistic think that way? Back pain is structural, specific and symptomatic. Pain is all the

more real (therefore: combatable) when it's understood as the impropriety of the unhappy masses. Woe is me, me is us. Colin Smith's meticulously foul temper, unfed greed for answers, rage against the condom dispenser in cancerously funny poetry is as specific as "it" gets. To be made an example of.

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Re: bernadette mayer

18 May 2008

The room had spent a few days lamenting how thin the criticism on Bernadette Mayer was; Laura Hinton's own library search had turned up next to nothing, and the request went round for anyone who knew better.

Here's a chance for me to plug a recent scholarly book I loved,

It's by Maggie Nelson and it's called

Women, the New York School and Other True Abstractions.

<http://www.uiopress.uiowa.edu/books/2007-fall/nelsonwomnew.html>

Nelson, a poet herself, is especially lively and provocative when she writes on Bernadette Mayer's work... which she does at some length, here's the TOC:

Part One 1. Abstract Practices: The Art of Joan Mitchell, Barbara Guest, and Their Others 2. Getting Particular: Gender at Play in the Work of John Ashbery, Frank O'Hara, and James Schuyler

Part Two 3. What Life Isn't Daily? The Gratuitous Art of Bernadette Mayer 4. Dear Dark Continent: Alice Notley's Disobediences 5. When We're Alone in Public: The Metabolic Work of Eileen Myles

I recommend it to everyone even if you're rolling your eyes thinking, oh God, not another New York School book, for this one has that different angle that makes everything (nearly everything) new all over again. And it has a blurb by Kim Gordon!

Kevin K.

At 1:43 PM -0400 5/18/08, laura hinton wrote:

It's an important point that there is very little critical scholarship on Mayer's work, at least as of a couple of years ago, when I did a library search on this topic. I was stunned. Juliana Spahr does have a piece on Mayer's sonnets in a literary journal; the Gordon piece, also helpful, is on the web. My belief is that Mayer's seemingly too earnest use of the "I" made her unpopular with the experimentals — the schools to which she justly belongs. But Midwinter Day is a very important book. I happen to be writing a chapter in my new book on Mayer's "I", in which I reinterpret its significance. That is in progress. If anyone knows of other critical work on Mayer, I'd appreciate knowing about this, too. Thanks, Maria and Nick, for writing. Laura On

Sat, May 17, 2008 at 9:20 PM, Nick Piombino [REDACTED] wrote: md-There is, of course, Nada Gordon on Bernadette Mayer <http://home.jps.net/~nada/mayer7.htm> <<http://home.jps.net/%7Enada/mayer7.htm>> Best wishes, np On 5/17/08 11:19 AM, "Maria Damon" [REDACTED] wrote: > hi folks > does anyone know of any good critical scholarship on Bernadette Mayer's > work? I've got a student who wants to know. > bests, md

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For San Francisco fans, Taylor Mead comes to Yerba Buena

11 Sep 2008

Taylor Mead — Warhol superstar, underground-film clown, last of the great New York bohemians — had not brought his films west in decades, and Kevin, always first in line for a living legend, wanted the whole Bay Area in the seats beside him.

I'm so excited that Taylor Mead is coming here next week and I want everyone to know about it! Come on, Bay Area, the guy hasn't been here in, hmm, 30 years, and he was born in 1924! Living legend!

Meet me and Dodie in the front row when they show, THE FLOWER THIEF!

xxx Kevin K.

Yerba Buena Center for the Arts presents TAYLOR MEAD: A CLOWN UNDERGROUND Thu, Sep 18, Fri, Sep 19 & Sun, Sep 21, 7:30 pm Taylor Mead in person Sep 18 & 19

"If he had decided to live in Paris instead of New York, they'd have built several monuments to Taylor Mead a long time ago." - Gary Indiana

"My philosophy is from Nietzsche: minimum of effort and maximum of error. It's gotten me practically nowhere." - Taylor Mead

Performer and poet Taylor Mead has starred in over 100 films and is a central figure in the history of underground cinema. He is best known for the films he made with Andy Warhol, including *Lonesome Cowboys* and *Nude Restaurant*). Now over 80 years old, Mead's work has a mature innocence, and a celebration of (and longing for) peace and joy that is missing from so much contemporary art today. His performances often bring to mind Chaplin's "tramp" character. Mead will make his first San Francisco appearance in decades.

Thu, Sep 18, 7:30 pm THE FLOWER THIEF BY RON RICE "In Ron Rice's baggy-pantsed beatnik artifact, Warhol superstar in training Mead traipses with elfin glee through a lost San Francisco of smoke-stuffed North Beach cafés, oceanside fairgrounds, and collapsed post-industrial ruins. Boinging along an improvised picaresque up and down the city's hills, Mead teases playground schoolkids, gets abducted by cowboys in the park, and has a tea party on a pile of rubble with a

potbellied bathing beauty." -Village Voice. Screening will be followed by a discussion and reading with Mead.

Fri, Sep 19, 7:30 pm LONESOME COWBOYS BY ANDY WARHOL Long before Brokeback Mountain there was Lonesome Cowboys, a homoerotic satire of the Western with a hilarious, raunchy co-starring role by Mead. Shot on location at a ranch in Arizona used previously for John Wayne movies, Warhol edited the film while recuperating from his gunshot wound. Also starring Viva and Joe Dallesandro. Followed by discussion with Mead.

Sun, Sep 21, 7:30 pm EXCAVATING TAYLOR MEAD BY WILLIAM A. KIRKLEY If you enjoyed any of the other Mead screenings, you won't want to miss this poignant documentary, which offers many insights into the life of this underground superstar. The film follows Mead through his eccentric daily life, and examines the complete history of his film and performance work. Narrated by Steve Buscemi.

YERBA BUENA CENTER FOR THE ARTS 701 MISSION ST (AT THIRD) SAN FRANCISCO

FOR TICKETS AND INFORMATION, VISIT WWW.YBCA.ORG OR CALL 415-978-ARTS

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Re: toys

14 Dec 2008

A teacher named Chris had come to the list for help building an undergraduate course around toys in poetry; Kevin, who never met a syllabus he couldn't furnish, obliged.

Hi Chris,

You are on the right track with Daniel Tiffany's book which is so excellent!!!

Also I wonder if you've seen the Baudelaire piece, "A Philosophy of Toys," that's another good one, and undergraduates seem to really identify with CB in this memoir slash essay, really extraordinary thinking and writing,

Kevin K San Francisco, CA

Hi all, I wonder if any of you good folk have some top of mind thoughts on the presence of toys in contemporary poetry? I'm beginning to think about an undergraduate course for next fall - sophomores - and think 'toys' would make a great theme. So far, by stumbling through the list of his works when looking for information on Pound's radio broadcasts, I have one work of criticism on the subject by Daniel Tiffany. Other than "A Doll's House" I'm at the very beginning. Please help! Chris

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Toys and Spicer

15 Dec 2008

George Bowering, the Canadian poet, wanted the collected Spicer that Kevin had lately edited with Peter Gizzi — reason enough, in a season already given over to toys, for Kevin to tease the whole nation of Canada.

| *Kevin, While we have you here: when can we go to our local store and get the Spicer tome? Mr. G.H.Bowering*

Hi George,

Down here in the US, the inferior US, copies are available in the bookstores. If you are having trouble locating them in the bookstores of superior Canada, well, they have all those Canadian books to sell through first. I think this is called the trickle up theory.

Let me see if I can get you one,

Oh, and here is a poem by Spicer on the Toys theme Chris Chapman put out there (from 15 False Propositions against God, 1958)

Millions of meaningless toys
If the child isn't born soon we'll have to close the
toyshop. The second Joyful mystery. They make them out of trees and rubber
bands and place them in stockings and cradles
No one Knows how to play with
them. Kneel At his birth Meaningless As he is
They are not his toys or our toys we
must play with. They are Our toys.

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*By 2009 Kevin had gone all but silent on the list. What writing energy
these years still held went elsewhere — the Kenning anthology of poets'
theater he was assembling with David Brazil, the tireless Amazon
reviews, the readings he went on hosting — and the room saw him now
mostly when a friend had a book to launch.*

2010

New Books by Andrea Brady and Ryan Murphy from KRUPSKAYA

23 Feb 2010

Another spring, another pair of Krupskaya titles for Kevin to herald; the press he helped run was one of the few causes that could still reliably bring him back to the list.

The Editors of KRUPSKAYA Books are very pleased to announce the publication of two new poetry books for 2010:

Wildfire: a verse essay on obscurity and illumination

by Andrea Brady

WILDFIRE is a verse essay. It is trying to persuade us, to recognize that certain catastrophes and felicities are not inevitable. It concerns the history of incendiary devices, of the evolution of Greek fire from a divine secret which could sustain or destroy empires, into white phosphorus and napalm; the elliptical fires of the pre-Socratics, Aristotle's service to Alexander in the fashioning of pyrotechnics, the burning/blooming/mating bodies of G. H. Schubert and the self-feeding crowds of Elias Canetti; mechanisms to project fire, to make it burn on water and stick to wood and skin, to keep it off the walls of the besieged towns, and what those mechanisms (projection and defense) have done to geometry; the courts of fire, the legal chamber and the hortus conclusus, and the margins of ambiguity where it is lobbed with impunity; embedded nuggets and embedded reporters, the discovery of the chemical element, industrial tragedy, the resistance of the matchgirls at Bryant & May, the corruption of Quaker capitalists, washing powder and toothpaste. It is an etiology of metaphors, "shake-n-bake" and whisky pete and phantom fury. It is also an argument about obscurity and illumination: WILDFIRE does both, smokes the bright air and singes the night with trajectories. And so an interrogation of writing practices which fume as much as they enlighten.

<http://www.spdbooks.org/Product/9781928650317/wildfire-a-verse-essay-on-obscurity-and-illumination.aspx>

The Redcoats

by Ryan Murphy

"In one of the most striking lines in THE REDCOATS, Ryan Murphy says, 'I have cannibalized other moments to invent this one.' We all do that, of course, but, as Murphy shows us, the present is still tenuous, porous. In these poems you will find the ghosts of what are called American heroes, Paul Revere, Neil Armstrong, Thomas Paine, washed up along with other detritus, in a 'Yardsale: one broken promise/after another.' 'A lawnchair festooned with balloons.' This is Oppen's 'light of shipwreck,' an insomniac's waking dream. There is a restless sweep to this book, or, as the speaker tells us, 'I can't stop thinking of the nothing I want.'"

—Rae Armantrout

<http://www.spdbooks.org/Product/9781928650300/the-redcoats.aspx>

Available through Small Press Distribution

<http://www.spdbooks.org/Default.aspx>

<http://www.krupskayabooks.com/index.htm>

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Re: Michael, who I never knew

22 Mar 2010

Michael Benedikt — poet, and editor of the sixties anthology of poets' theater that Kevin took as the model for the one he was then assembling with David Brazil — had died in 2007; a list member's meditation on a secondhand copy of his drew Kevin, plainly, to answer in kind.

Thank you Alan, for your characteristically generous tribute to Michael Benedikt. I never met him either, but in recent years have had many occasions to bless his memory. His landmark 60s anthology of US poets theater work THEATRE EXPERIMENT was the direct predecessor to the book that David Brazil and I have been editing, THE KENNING ANTHOLOGY OF POETS THEATER 1945-1985. THEATRE EXPERIMENT, with its swirl of myriad theaters, everyone from e.e. cummings to Carolee Schneeman, was the benchmark we hoped to emulate. The guy must really have been something, as you suggest.

Kevin K.

Michael Benedikt and George E. Wellwarth edited Modern French Theatre: The Avant-Garde, Dada, and Surrealism. I recently bought a used copy of the book, first edition. It might have been Benedikt's first book. There's an author's signature on the title page, and an inscription inside the front cover: for Mother dear and F.F. with thanks for the right genes, Michael Michael Benedikt was born in 1935 and died in 2007. I didn't know him. There is something uncanny about the inscription. Michael Benedikt lived 72 years. I think perhaps he gave this to his mother with a sense of pride; he was 29. I think to myself: He gave this book to his mother and F.F., perhaps a father. His mother and perhaps F.F. died, and Michael inherited. It would have been sad for the book to be returned to him, after a temporary journey of pride and happiness. And then Michael died and someone, perhaps a wife or other relative, sold or gave away some of his books, perhaps all of them, and this was one of them. And so Modern French Theater ends up in Adam Tobin's book-store, coming from somewhere, somewhere unknown, perhaps untraceable, and I am reading and learning a great deal, revisiting some old friends, playwrights within. I fear death, death dominates me; I am constantly fighting off depression as best I can. As we run out of money, depression and stress increase. And I think: soon this book will be passed on, and I am less than a silent witness to its passing. So perhaps this is the singing of a solitary and mournful note, so that its passing will be remembered. And perhaps this will be forgotten as well.

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Re: anything anymore anywhere spring 2010 out now!!

26 Mar 2010

Margaret Konkol had just pressed a young Edinburgh journal on the list, and Kevin — constitutionally unable to let an enthusiasm go unseconded — added his voice.

I second the praise Margaret Konkol has given to the new Edinburgh-based fiction and poetry journal, "Anything, Anymore, Anywhere." It is glowing like a fire, without and within.

Here's how to order your copy,

<http://www.anything-anymore-anywhere.com/>

Thanks, Margaret,

Thanks Reuben and Colin,

Kevin K. San Francisco

*Congratulations to Colin Herd and Reuben Sutton on an exquisite March 2010 issue of *anything anymore anywhere.* My copy arrived in the mail today and I am reading the wonderful contributions of Maric Arrieta, James Davies, Marcus Whale, Devin Johnston as well as many others! Cheers, Margaret Konkol*

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Re: Query: Poetry Benchmarks 1971

28 Jun 2010

Rachel Levitsky had asked the room to reconstruct the poetry of 1971, and the crowd-sourced almanac was a Poetics-list specialty; Kevin, who had been all of eighteen that year, played the game better than anyone.

Dear Rachel,

My God, I was 18 then....

I remember living in New York and the following things happened, though most of them I didn't find out about till years later! For me personally the signal arts events of 1971 were seeing Bette Midler at the Continental Bath House.... and Maria Callas working at Juilliard giving the master class to voice students, but anybody could get in just about. But in poetry, you might say 1971 involved....

Birth of Tupac Shakur, Kazim Ali, Jeff Clark, Brigid Pegeen Kelly, Beth Ann Fennelly, Snoop Dogg, Terrance Hayes, Evelyn Lau

Patti Smith performs with Lenny Kaye February 10 at the Poetry Project (first collaboration)

Ted Berrigan, Train Ride

Jack Spicer, The Red Wheelbarrow

Anne-Marie Albiach, Etat

Sonia Sanchez joins Nation of Islam

Linda Nochlin, “Why have there been no great woman artists?” (published)

The Collected Poems of Frank O’Hara, ed. Donald M. Allen

Jose Lezama Lima, Complete Poems (Cuban publication)

Adrienne Rich publishes The Will to Change

Elizabeth Bishop meets Alice Methfessel

Louis Zukofsky, ALL: The Collected Shorter Poems (final version)

High point of Bolinas as American poetry capital

Pablo Neruda receives Nobel Prize

Duncan and Levertov quarrel reaches flash point in Sept—November 1971

Sun Ra, “The Black Man in the Cosmos” (course at UC Berkeley)

Philip Whalen, Scenes of Life at the Capital

John Lennon releases “Imagine” (autumn)

Andy Warhol designs Sticky Fingers cover for the Stones (spring)

Jackson Mac Low, Stanzas for Iris Lezak

Valerie Eliot publishes Waste Land facsimile from original manuscripts

Anne Waldman edits Another World Nam June Paik, TV Cello with Charlotte Moorman

Hugh Kenner, The Pound Era

Death of Ogden Nash, Jim Morrison, Paul Blackburn, Stevie Smith, Lew Welch

Love ya, Kevin K.

*Dear Friends, What would you put on a list of significant poetry moments of 1971?
Thank you for your help! Rachel Levitsky*

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2013

Re: Spicer query

30 Jan 2013

Maria Damon had asked the list to identify the Allen Joyce of Spicer's "Some Notes on Whitman for Allen Joyce" — and improbably a cousin of the man turned up in the thread. Kevin had spent years inside those letters while writing Poet Be Like God, and he answers less as the biographer than as someone who had grown fond of a dead man's beloved.

Whoa, Elisabeth, that is definitely the same guy.

I gathered from friends of Allen's that, at the time he met Spicer, he was sort of what was once called a "remittance man," that his family gave him an allowance on condition he stayed away (maybe not in so many words).

What a small world and to have it emerge on the Poetics List, there's a strange beauty in this. Please keep me posted on your further investigations. Your cousin haunts me, and the letters and poems Spicer wrote to him are about as warm as he got,

Cheers from San Francisco,

Kevin K.

Maria, I never think of myself being related to anyone (certainly not to James Joyce), and there are a surprising number of Joyces out there, so I almost overlooked this notice. However, I think Allen Joyce actually is a cousin of mine. I know little about that sector of my family due to the schism which occurred when my grandfather took up with my grandmother when his wife was pregnant with their ninth child. However, I do know that Allen was born in Hawaii in 1930. His father, Allen R. Joyce, was a commander of submarines, partly during WWII, and he retired as a Rear Admiral. I think he was based in San Diego. My father told me not too long ago that Allen Jr. was gay. I am investigating this further and will back channel with more details. I am fairly sure that I can contact Allen's nephew and gather more details. Elisabeth Joyce

*From: Poetics List (UPenn, UB)
[REDACTED] on behalf of reJennifer Bartlett [REDACTED] Sent:
Sunday, January 27, 2013 1:17 PM To: [REDACTED] Subject: Re: Spicer
query I do! I do! He was what Kevin Killian and Lewis E, call in Spicer's bio a "more
conventional boyfriend" Spicer met as he was a "fixtue in Berthelon's Berkeley
salon." I just glanced and haven't read it in year, but Allen is mentioned numerous
times in "poet be like God" I Love that book! But it's a little hard to get and expensive
(\$40). Jen On Thu, Jan 24, 2013 at 4:34 PM, Maria Damon [REDACTED] wrote:
Does anyone know who Allen Joyce was or is, mentioned in Jack Spicer's poem "Some
Notes on Whitman for Allen Joyce"?*

=====**=====

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2014

Re: Poetics List (1993-2014)

23 Jan 2014

Charles Bernstein had just wound up the Poetics List after twenty-one years, and its people were writing their goodbyes. This is the last thing Kevin ever posted to it.

Charles, perhaps a final American Graffiti moment to tell us where they are now, the men and women who started this strange utopian project and whose names were once as familiar to me as my own?

Maybe that's the urge of the novelist, not the poet.

Thanks for doing this,

xxx Kevin K.

On Jan 23, 2014, at 3:22 PM, Jason Quackenbush [REDACTED] wrote:

what jim said. i've been lurking the last few years during my career shift but I will miss this source of news information and camaraderie. it's influence on my development as a poet and writer is not something that could be easily measured, but I would have ended up somewhere different, and probably less richly embroidered, if it hadn't existed. On Jan 23, 2014, at 11:17 AM, jim andrews [REDACTED] wrote: Thanks, Charles. The list has been important in my life. I started reading it and the Electronic Poetry Center in 1995. I'd print out interesting essays by you, Charles, and others, and I'd leave them in the coffee shop where I hosted a weekly poetry reading series in Victoria Canada. The essays always disappeared; people appreciated them. The list introduced me to many interesting poets and their poetics over the years. The list was the strongest internationalist element in English poetry for many years, I think. Many thanks, Charles, for such egalitarian use of your considerable 'cultural capital' in creating the list and the Electronic Poetry Center with Loss and others. Well done. Very well done. ja <http://vispo.com> Jason Quackenbush [REDACTED]

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Appendix — Announcements & Notices

The readings, launches, new sites, and notices he sent — gathered here so the record of what he was doing is kept apart from what he was writing. 126 in all.

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1995

- 11 Apr 1995 Death of Andy Cole
- 09 Jun 1995 SPT reading series
- 16 Oct 1995 FBI files
- 19 Oct 1995 Announcement of reading in SF
- 19 Oct 1995 Another important SF writing event

1996

- 03 Jan 1996 Small Press Traffic readings
- 29 Jan 1996 SPT Upcoming Events
- 31 Jan 1996 Reply of Our Lady Teresa
- 01 Feb 1996 SPT writing workshop
- 12 Feb 1996 obtaining the SPT newsletter
- 05 Mar 1996 SPT mailing address
- 19 Mar 1996 SPT: Island of Lost Souls
- 19 Mar 1996 SPT: Rae Armantrout & Fanny Howe
- 23 Mar 1996 SPT newsletter in space
- 08 Apr 1996 Re: happy national poetry month
- 09 Apr 1996 West Coast Brodey Reading
- 15 Apr 1996 Re: art in dept stores
- 16 Apr 1996 SPT book consignments
- 22 Apr 1996 Ron Silliman Live in San Francisco!
- 22 Apr 1996 Erica Hunt/Camille Roy in San Francisco
- 11 May 1996 Stephen Jonas
- 13 May 1996 SPT's annual soiree
- 02 Jun 1996 Bernadette Mayer comes to SF--ANNOUNCEMENT
- 21 Jul 1996 Re: Loy readings
- 06 Aug 1996 August Events at Small Press Traffic
- 08 Aug 1996 Yet another SF reading
- 09 Aug 1996 Conventional Wisdom
- 18 Aug 1996 SPT Archive, part 2
- 26 Aug 1996 Marlene Nourbese Philip
- 10 Sep 1996 SPT--Proliferation #3 Reading
- 18 Sep 1996 Barbara Guest reading in San Francisco
- 21 Sep 1996 SPT: Moriarity/Tu
- 21 Sep 1996 SPT: Moriarity/Tu
- 12 Oct 1996 Ronald Johnson
- 14 Oct 1996 Robertson & Moure rock SPT
- 16 Oct 1996 Ronald Johnson sighting
- 18 Oct 1996 Ronald Johnson, Jorie Graham
- 30 Oct 1996 Re: New Publication
- 01 Nov 1996 SPT readings
- 07 Nov 1996 San Francisco Premonitions Reading
- 18 Nov 1996 Spicer's Language
- 30 Nov 1996 Burt Bacharach's Western music
- 30 Nov 1996 George Oppen
- 08 Dec 1996 Re: poetry in transit
- 10 Dec 1996 Juliana Spahr, Susan Gevirtz reading Dec. 6

1997

12 Jan 1997 the Mina Loy effect
 02 Feb 1997 Susan Howe takes San Francisco by storm
 24 Feb 1997 Re: playwrights
 06 Mar 1997 Prosodia benefit reading
 13 Mar 1997 upcoming at Small Press Traffic
 19 Mar 1997 SPT: Pamela Lu and Ann Verornica Simon
 31 Mar 1997 Killian/Spicer and an appeal
 31 Mar 1997 "The Schwimmer Effect"
 18 Jul 1997 Re: New LVNG Supplemental
 30 Jul 1997 Anne-Marie Albiach tribute at SPT
 09 Aug 1997 Anne-Marie Albiach tribute in San Francisco
 08 Sep 1997 Small Press Traffic's literary soiree
 22 Sep 1997 Torres/Scalapino at SPT
 23 Sep 1997 Re: reading at SPT/New College, Oct 3
 25 Sep 1997 Caroline Bergvall/Kevin Killian in San Francisco
 16 Oct 1997 Luisa Futoransky, Sarah Menefee--ASAP at SPT
 21 Nov 1997 Davis and in SF
 22 Nov 1997 Carole Maso in San Francisco
 05 Dec 1997 SPT: Shurin, Ferguson, Allison, Gomez
 16 Dec 1997 Kathleen Fraser tribute
 18 Dec 1997 Ngai and Farrell at SPT

1998

04 Jan 1998 January Readings at SPT
 19 Jan 1998 List member in the news
 28 Jan 1998 next week at Small Press Traffic
 09 Feb 1998 Duncan tribute at Small Press Traffic
 10 Feb 1998 Raworth & Flores at SPT
 17 Feb 1998 Dahlen/Gudath at SPT
 24 Feb 1998 Retallack, Swensen, Retallack at SPT
 04 Mar 1998 Saidenberg, Mullen, Nielsen at SPT
 18 Mar 1998 Heller/objectivists/SPT
 31 Mar 1998 Moving Borders reading at SPT
 11 Apr 1998 A. Berrigan/Y. Morrison at Canessa Park
 11 Apr 1998 SF catsitting gig
 12 Apr 1998 Re: local issue: byrkit performance
 20 Apr 1998 Donahue, Roberson at SPT
 08 May 1998 Marianne Moore rocks at SPT
 20 May 1998 Anne Carson at SPT
 03 Jun 1998 Poets Theater in San Francisco, round 10
 09 Jun 1998 Killian, Gluck, and more in SF
 01 Aug 1998 Two new books I've read
 16 Sep 1998 This week: San Francisco events
 22 Sep 1998 Fanny Howe in San Francisco!
 04 Oct 1998 San Francisco Spicer celebrations
 15 Oct 1998 Lopez, Selby at SPT
 22 Oct 1998 Alice Notley in SF TONIGHT!
 22 Oct 1998 MacCormack & Silliman in SF
 02 Nov 1998 SPT off-site events this weekend
 02 Dec 1998 SPT: Lipstick 11 Reading
 09 Dec 1998 L. Shaw talks F. O'Hara in SF
 10 Dec 1998 Poets of the MLA

1999

12 Jan 1999 Gizzi and Thackrey at SPT
 16 Jan 1999 "The Kink of Chris Komater"
 26 Jan 1999 Myung Mi Kim residency at SPT
 25 Feb 1999 Two Guys Named Jeff: Clark and Derksen at SPT

04 May 1999 Berkson/Friedman at SPT
15 Sep 1999 volunteers sought for SPT soiree
29 Oct 1999 Donald M. Allen in San Francisco
31 Oct 1999 Tina Darragh & P. Inman
15 Dec 1999 Bay Area Now Walking Tour

2000

20 Sep 2000 Word of Mouth event in Oakland, CA
01 Oct 2000 Abigail Child's San Francisco Retrospective
10 Oct 2000 Tom Carey and Kevin Killian

2001

17 Apr 2001 Fwd: *LISA JARNOT READING APRIL 24*
11 Jul 2001 Poets in Film (San Francisco, Friday July 13)
31 Jul 2001 Reading, San Francisco, Sunday, August 5
06 Sep 2001 George thoughts
08 Oct 2001 If you're in San Francisco this week

2002

13 Apr 2002 D. Kovac/S. Young reading in San Francisco
12 Aug 2002 Bowie events in San Francisco

2003

07 May 2003 Acker tribute, tonight, San Francisco, City Lights
13 Aug 2003 SF reading Thursday Aug 14. Free.
07 Nov 2003 Ian Wallace, Magazine Piece in San Francisco
07 Nov 2003 Nine Lives, Saturday event, San Francisco, Small Press Traffic.
09 Nov 2003 "17 Reasons," Public Art in San Francisco

2004

03 Sep 2004 Reading and Book Party for Rob Halpern's RUMORED PLACE
25 Sep 2004 New Play by Kevin Killian and D-L Alvarez

2006

13 Nov 2006 Sam D'Allesandro Tribute at USF (San Francisco) Wednesday

2007

15 Jul 2007 Three events
02 Oct 2007 Re: Boston

2008

19 May 2008 Sad news in the East Bay

2011

14 Aug 2011 About Elizabeth Bishop, does anyone know....

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Appendix — A Complete Catalogue

Every message in the archive, in order. Reviews and essays are reproduced above; the rest — announcements, forwards, reading notices — are logged here so the record is complete. 693 in all.

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1995

- 19 Mar 1995 To you · *essay*
- 21 Mar 1995 Re: Memory Play · *essay*
- 25 Mar 1995 Mystery Slasher · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 01 Apr 1995 Re: Responsibility · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 02 Apr 1995 Re: Desire · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 03 Apr 1995 Re: Desire, Ira Lightman · *Dodie's voice — signed "XOX Dodie," writing openly as a non-member of the list*
- 04 Apr 1995 40, 50, and 60 year olds · *essay*
- 04 Apr 1995 Re: Desire, Ira Lightman · *Dodie's voice — signed "Dodie"*
- 08 Apr 1995 Leland Hickman, Joe Brainard · *essay*
- 08 Apr 1995 Re: Standing · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 08 Apr 1995 Re: Standing · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 08 Apr 1995 The mysteries of the mysterious menses · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 11 Apr 1995 Death of Andy Cole · *announcement*
- 12 Apr 1995 Jack Smith · *essay*
- 21 Apr 1995 Throttled by angels · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 23 Apr 1995 Re: re-politics again · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 23 Apr 1995 Throttling · *essay*
- 26 Apr 1995 Re: Email Virus (fwd) · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 26 Apr 1995 Re: Email Virus (fwd) · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 27 Apr 1995 Re: Malls, Mail and Romance · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 08 May 1995 Directory assistance · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 08 May 1995 Looking for . . . · *bare address request*
- 09 May 1995 Re: birthdays · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 14 May 1995 body metaphors · *Dodie's voice — signed "XOX, Dodie"*
- 15 May 1995 Re: really Real · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 15 May 1995 Re: really Real · *Dodie's voice — signed "Dodie"*
- 17 May 1995 Re: irony · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 18 May 1995 Re: The REAL Ern Malley · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 18 May 1995 Re: one big tease · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 20 May 1995 Re: mail by the megabyte? · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 27 May 1995 Re: Sentiment · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 29 May 1995 Re: Art, etc. · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 30 May 1995 Re: Sentiment · *Dodie's voice — signed "Dodie Bellamy"*
- 07 Jun 1995 opportunity knocks · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 07 Jun 1995 Re: Warren Sonbert 1947-1995 · *essay*
- 07 Jun 1995 Report on Blaser Conference · *essay*
- 09 Jun 1995 Blaserfest Back Channel · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 09 Jun 1995 Re: opportunity knocks · *Dodie's voice; one-line scheduling reply*
- 09 Jun 1995 SPT reading series · *announcement*
- 09 Jun 1995 mea culpa listserv · *Dodie's voice — signed "Dodie Bellamy"*
- 09 Jun 1995 Fireworks at NYU Kerouac Conference · *forward of Levi Asher's newsgroup report on the NYU Kerouac conference*
- 14 Jun 1995 Re: What is this list for? · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 14 Jun 1995 List fantasies · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 15 Jun 1995 Re: sun & moon/blue M&Ms · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 16 Jun 1995 Re: Think the Reverse · *Dodie's voice — signed "Dodie B.," speaking of Kevin in the third person*
- 20 Jun 1995 Re: rules and reverse thinking · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 23 Jun 1995 Bedside reading · *essay*
- 27 Jun 1995 Re: Doom Patrols (Reading list) · *Dodie Bellamy*

23 Jun 1995 Bedside reading · *duplicate of the June bedside-reading post (1995_06:18)*
 23 Jul 1995 POEMS Syndrome · *Dodie's voice; forwarded rare-disorder database entry*
 26 Jul 1995 Re: Yasusada = Ern Malley · *essay*
 28 Jul 1995 the feminine, the troubled axis · *Dodie Bellamy*
 09 Aug 1995 Re: ringing renga · *Dodie Bellamy*
 27 Aug 1995 George Stanley · *relay of a book notice with ordering address*
 29 Aug 1995 Millay · *essay*
 01 Sep 1995 Millay · *essay*
 11 Sep 1995 Re: I'm dreadfully sorry ! · *essay*
 11 Sep 1995 A happy result of a long process · *essay*
 12 Sep 1995 Address query · *bare address request*
 30 Sep 1995 Re: Sitwell · *essay*
 16 Oct 1995 FBI files · *announcement*
 16 Oct 1995 Re: Poetry in Motion (Review) · *essay*
 19 Oct 1995 Announcement of reading in SF · *announcement*
 19 Oct 1995 Another important SF writing event · *announcement*
 24 Oct 1995 Re: Niedecker/Zukofsky · *essay*
 5 Nov 1995 Re: EPC.Live · *Dodie Bellamy*
 6 Nov 1995 Re: EPC.Live · *Dodie Bellamy*
 8 Nov 1995 Re: EPC.Live · *essay*
 14 Nov 1995 snarl · *Dodie Bellamy*
 18 Nov 1995 Re: Stein trouble · *Dodie Bellamy*
 20 Nov 1995 Re: Stein marathon · *Dodie Bellamy*
 21 Nov 1995 Re: Stein marathon · *Dodie Bellamy*
 27 Nov 1995 Re: Condition of Poetry in the Academy · *Dodie Bellamy*

1996

03 Jan 1996 Small Press Traffic readings · *announcement*
 04 Jan 1996 Re: WEB POETRY · *Dodie's voice — she posts her own magazine piece*
 13 Jan 1996 Re: Postmodern American Poetry: the Norton Anthology · *Dodie Bellamy*
 19 Jan 1996 Re: Boontling · *Dodie's voice (Spicer's Martian, from Kevin's manuscript)*
 20 Jan 1996 Renga Solution · *Dodie's voice — a Renga shareware find*
 20 Jan 1996 Renga Solution Redux · *Dodie's voice — cleaned-up Renga repost*
 21 Jan 1996 Re: Ghosts vs. Martians · *Dodie Bellamy*
 21 Jan 1996 Kevin Spacey · *essay*
 23 Jan 1996 Re: Ghosts & Martians · *Dodie Bellamy*
 24 Jan 1996 Boys in space · *essay*
 24 Jan 1996 Re: primo bio · *essay*
 24 Jan 1996 Re: primo bio · *essay*
 24 Jan 1996 Re: The Mysteries of Space Revealed · *Dodie Bellamy*
 26 Jan 1996 Small Press Traffic Internships · *Dodie Bellamy*
 27 Jan 1996 Re: intro (new to list) · *essay*
 29 Jan 1996 SPT Upcoming Events · *announcement*
 29 Jan 1996 Re: movies/hunger/rockets (i.e., kerouac),,,and Sundance · *Dodie Bellamy*
 31 Jan 1996 Re: biographies... · *essay*
 31 Jan 1996 Re: neuromantic poetry · *Dodie Bellamy*
 31 Jan 1996 Reply of Our Lady Teresa · *announcement*
 01 Feb 1996 Re: dunno but · *Dodie Bellamy*
 01 Feb 1996 SPT writing workshop · *announcement*
 02 Feb 1996 The Hellfire Club · *essay*
 02 Feb 1996 Re: poetics of the quotidian · *Dodie Bellamy*
 04 Feb 1996 beatlist · *bare relay of the Beat-L list address*
 04 Feb 1996 beatlist--more · *Dodie Bellamy*
 05 Feb 1996 Re: doom patrols... · *Dodie Bellamy*
 05 Feb 1996 Re: dunno but · *Dodie Bellamy*
 09 Feb 1996 Re: POET'S BIRTHDAYS · *Dodie's voice*
 10 Feb 1996 Re: e=r=o=t=i=c · *Dodie Bellamy*
 10 Feb 1996 SPT newsletter call for reviews · *Dodie Bellamy*

10 Feb 1996 Re: smart · *Dodie Bellamy*
 10 Feb 1996 Re: e=r=o=t=i=c · *essay*
 12 Feb 1996 obtaining the SPT newsletter · *announcement*
 12 Feb 1996 Re: writing the body · *Dodie's voice (the Cixous exchange)*
 13 Feb 1996 Re: writing the body · *Dodie Bellamy*
 15 Feb 1996 Re: ROOF BOOKS -- Special Offer · *Dodie Bellamy*
 16 Feb 1996 Re: on condition of anonymity · *Dodie's voice*
 29 Feb 1996 Spring issue of SPT newsletter · *Dodie Bellamy*
 03 Mar 1996 Re: Pound translation · *essay*
 04 Mar 1996 Trivia question about Henry James · *essay*
 05 Mar 1996 SPT mailing address · *announcement*
 08 Mar 1996 Re: Jim Brodey "Heart of the Breath" Readings · *Dodie Bellamy*
 09 Mar 1996 SPT upcoming events · *essay*
 11 Mar 1996 Re: Ghost books · *essay*
 18 Mar 1996 Feminist Measures · *Dodie Bellamy*
 19 Mar 1996 SPT: Island of Lost Souls · *announcement*
 19 Mar 1996 SPT: Rae Armantrout & Fanny Howe · *announcement*
 21 Mar 1996 Re: Jeanne McGahey · *essay*
 21 Mar 1996 SPT newsletter--has it arrived? · *Dodie Bellamy*
 22 Mar 1996 Re: Adelaide Crapsey · *note*
 23 Mar 1996 SPT newsletter in space · *announcement*
 24 Mar 1996 Re: Announcing _Broken English_ by Dodie Bellamy & Bob Harrison · *Dodie Bellamy*
 26 Mar 1996 SPT newsletter at EPC · *Dodie Bellamy*
 27 Mar 1996 Re: The Bay scene in 1950s · *essay*
 27 Mar 1996 Re: query abt stein/toklas · *essay*
 01 Apr 1996 Re: Spicer and art · *essay*
 08 Apr 1996 Re: happy national poetry month · *announcement*
 09 Apr 1996 West Coast Brodey Reading · *announcement*
 12 Apr 1996 Minneapolis · *Dodie Bellamy*
 13 Apr 1996 Re: Minneapolis · *Dodie Bellamy*
 13 Apr 1996 Re: Minneapolis · *Dodie Bellamy*
 14 Apr 1996 (no subject) · *Dodie's one-line reply*
 14 Apr 1996 Re: minnesota · *Dodie Bellamy*
 14 Apr 1996 Re: malls · *essay*
 15 Apr 1996 Re: art in dept stores · *announcement*
 15 Apr 1996 Re: minnesota · *Dodie Bellamy*
 16 Apr 1996 Re: minnesota · *Dodie Bellamy*
 16 Apr 1996 SPT book consignments · *announcement*
 22 Apr 1996 Ron Silliman Live in San Francisco! · *announcement*
 22 Apr 1996 Erica Hunt/Camille Roy in San Francisco · *announcement*
 22 Apr 1996 place can be cute too · *Dodie's voice — the Faulkner clipping*
 23 Apr 1996 Re: Erica Hunt · *Dodie's voice — reading logistics*
 24 Apr 1996 Re: Live from the Duncan Conference · *essay*
 24 Apr 1996 Help w/Ginsberg Archive · *forward of another member's archive query*
 30 Apr 1996 (no subject) · *Dodie Bellamy*
 01 May 1996 Re: rread · *Dodie's voice — an address correction*
 01 May 1996 Oppen: magazine appearances · *essay*
 10 May 1996 Re: POETICS Digest - 8 May 1996 to 9 May 1996 · *essay*
 11 May 1996 Stephen Jonas · *announcement*
 13 May 1996 SPT's annual soiree · *announcement*
 21 May 1996 Re: fake science: reply · *Dodie's voice*
 23 May 1996 Re: death in L.A. · *essay*
 23 May 1996 Come In Spinner! · *essay*
 02 Jun 1996 Bernadette Mayer comes to SF--ANNOUNCEMENT · *announcement*
 02 Jun 1996 "Stone Marmalade" · *essay*
 04 Jun 1996 Re: Bernadette Mayer · *Dodie Bellamy*
 10 Jun 1996 Re: Oppen Sesame · *essay*
 12 Jun 1996 Re: Miscellaneous stuff · *Dodie's voice*

- 12 Jun 1996 Communications Decency Act · *Dodie forwarding a Reuters wire story*
- 13 Jun 1996 SPT--oportunity knocks · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 25 Jun 1996 Fashion Report, dateline Orono · *essay*
- 25 Jun 1996 Jeremy Reed · *essay*
- 27 Jun 1996 General Report, dateline: Orono · *essay*
- 01 Jul 1996 Re: Jacquee la Mousse, ono etc · *Dodie's voice*
- 01 Jul 1996 Re: Jacquee la Mousse, ono etc · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 01 Jul 1996 haunted · *Dodie's voice*
- 01 Jul 1996 my stack · *essay*
- 08 Jul 1996 Re: Listpersonship/aldon/rvh · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 09 Jul 1996 Re: List wars · *Dodie's voice (the list-wars argument)*
- 09 Jul 1996 Re: List wars · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 09 Jul 1996 Re: List wars · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 10 Jul 1996 Re: List wars · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 10 Jul 1996 Re: the guy and the gulf war · *Dodie's voice*
- 12 Jul 1996 Re: white rose · *essay*
- 12 Jul 1996 Re: e-mail politics · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 13 Jul 1996 Re: white rose · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 16 Jul 1996 Re: press survival · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 16 Jul 1996 Re: press survival · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 17 Jul 1996 Re: Bad news · *Dodie's voice*
- 17 Jul 1996 Re: press survival · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 17 Jul 1996 Re: press survival · *bare typo correction*
- 19 Jul 1996 Re: feelingth, nothing more than feelingth... try to forget · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 19 Jul 1996 Re: feelingth, nothing more than feelingth... try to forget · *Dodie's voice*
- 20 Jul 1996 Re: feelingth, nothing more than feelingth... try to forget · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 21 Jul 1996 Re: Loy readings · *announcement*
- 21 Jul 1996 A plea for Ginny · *essay*
- 22 Jul 1996 Re: pathos, nothing more than bathos · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 22 Jul 1996 Re: Victim Art: the girl w/ cancer · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 22 Jul 1996 Re: Victim Art: the girl w/ cancer · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 22 Jul 1996 Re: Victim Art: the girl w/ cancer · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 22 Jul 1996 Re: Victim Art: the girl w/ cancer · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 06 Aug 1996 August Events at Small Press Traffic · *announcement*
- 06 Aug 1996 Re: disgruntled postal workers, dead mail & Bartleby · *Dodie's voice — the Eudora clipping*
- 08 Aug 1996 Yet another SF reading · *announcement*
- 09 Aug 1996 Conventional Wisdom · *announcement*
- 11 Aug 1996 Conventional Wisdom · *Dodie forwarding a call for submissions*
- 12 Aug 1996 Re: Juliana Spahr's new e-mail · *Dodie's voice — a secession rumor*
- 18 Aug 1996 SPT Archive · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 18 Aug 1996 SPT Archive, part 2 · *announcement*
- 26 Aug 1996 Marlene Nourbese Philip · *announcement*
- 07 Sep 1996 Re: uncle · *not Kevin — Adam DeGraff writing from the account*
- 07 Sep 1996 Re: uncle · *Dodie's voice — a zip-code correction*
- 07 Sep 1996 Re: "Poets vs. Critics" · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 08 Sep 1996 Dan Davidson · *essay*
- 10 Sep 1996 SPT--Proliferation #3 Reading · *announcement*
- 14 Sep 1996 Re: query: langpo and its discontents · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 18 Sep 1996 Tom Field show opens in San Francisco · *essay*
- 18 Sep 1996 Barbara Guest reading in San Francisco · *announcement*
- 19 Sep 1996 Giscombe/Fugitive · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 20 Sep 1996 Re: student racism (white trash) · *Dodie's voice*
- 21 Sep 1996 SPT: Moriarity/Tu · *announcement*
- 21 Sep 1996 SPT: Moriarity/Tu · *announcement*
- 06 Oct 1996 Re: Szyborska/Heaney/Nobels · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 06 Oct 1996 Hope you all can come to my play · *essay*
- 07 Oct 1996 Re: Szyborska/Heaney/Nobels · *Dodie Bellamy*

07 Oct 1996 Re: Giscombe/Fugitive · *Dodie Bellamy*
 08 Oct 1996 Re: Marjorie Perloff · *Dodie relaying Perloff's email address*
 12 Oct 1996 Re: Jay and Kay deFeo · *essay*
 12 Oct 1996 Ronald Johnson · *announcement*
 13 Oct 1996 Steve Carll reading · *essay*
 14 Oct 1996 Robertson & Moure rock SPT · *announcement*
 14 Oct 1996 student sincerity · *Dodie Bellamy*
 14 Oct 1996 Re: student sincerity · *essay*
 14 Oct 1996 Re: student sincerity · *Dodie's voice*
 14 Oct 1996 Re: student sincerity · *Dodie Bellamy*
 14 Oct 1996 Re: student sincerity · *Dodie Bellamy*
 16 Oct 1996 Ronald Johnson sighting · *announcement*
 18 Oct 1996 Ronald Johnson, Jorie Graham · *announcement*
 18 Oct 1996 Re: defensiveness as prop? · *Dodie Bellamy*
 22 Oct 1996 Re: defensiveness as prop? · *essay*
 24 Oct 1996 Re: michael moore -Reply · *Dodie Bellamy*
 29 Oct 1996 Re: politics, poetry, etc etc · *Dodie's voice (the Wojnarowicz post)*
 30 Oct 1996 Re: New Publication · *announcement*
 01 Nov 1996 SPT readings · *announcement*
 07 Nov 1996 San Francisco Premonitions Reading · *announcement*
 09 Nov 1996 Re: John Kinsella · *Dodie Bellamy*
 11 Nov 1996 San Francisco Events this week that I know about · *essay*
 18 Nov 1996 Spicer's Language · *announcement*
 21 Nov 1996 spam · *Dodie's voice — anti-spam instructions*
 21 Nov 1996 Re: annoying mail from chronotope.com · *Dodie's voice — anti-spam follow-up*
 21 Nov 1996 spam · *Dodie's voice — duplicate spam notice*
 22 Nov 1996 Re: queer beats · *Dodie Bellamy*
 30 Nov 1996 Re: M/M & westerns, deah · *essay*
 30 Nov 1996 Burt Bacharach's Western music · *announcement*
 30 Nov 1996 George Oppen · *announcement*
 01 Dec 1996 Re: Dead Man · *Dodie's voice — the Dead Man exchange*
 06 Dec 1996 Re: Another killer poet · *Dodie Bellamy*
 06 Dec 1996 Re: taste again, and a long story, and more · *Dodie Bellamy*
 08 Dec 1996 Re: poetry in transit · *announcement*
 09 Dec 1996 Food for Life · *essay*
 09 Dec 1996 Oppen lecture, December 5 · *essay*
 10 Dec 1996 Re: Oppen lecture, December 5 · *essay*
 10 Dec 1996 Juliana Spahr, Susan Gevirtz reading Dec. 6 · *announcement*
 10 Dec 1996 Re: The Week in Poetry (S.F.) · *Dodie Bellamy*
 14 Dec 1996 Re: patr-iarchy/onization · *essay*
 19 Dec 1996 SPT's winter newsletter is out!!!! · *Dodie Bellamy*
 19 Dec 1996 SPT's winter newsletter p.s. · *Dodie Bellamy*

1997

12 Jan 1997 the Mina Loy effect · *announcement*
 12 Jan 1997 The Retallack Effect · *Dodie Bellamy*
 12 Jan 1997 Dick and Spicer · *essay*
 14 Jan 1997 Re: Elmslie Reading? · *Dodie Bellamy*
 25 Jan 1997 Re: commisions · *Dodie Bellamy*
 25 Jan 1997 "Little Men" · *essay*
 01 Feb 1997 Re: Collapse · *essay*
 01 Feb 1997 Re: Click Rose by Dominique Fourcade · *essay*
 02 Feb 1997 Susan Howe takes San Francisco by storm · *announcement*
 03 Feb 1997 Re: allegories of berth · *Dodie Bellamy*
 04 Feb 1997 RLIN search · *essay*
 07 Feb 1997 RLIN search · *verbatim repost of the RLIN query from three days earlier*
 07 Feb 1997 "Arctic Summer" · *essay*
 11 Feb 1997 Re: Zones v. Zoos · *Dodie Bellamy*

13 Feb 1997 Re: Zones v. Zoos · *Dodie Bellamy*
 23 Feb 1997 Re: Repugnant selves · *essay*
 23 Feb 1997 Re: Repugnant selves · *essay*
 23 Feb 1997 Re: killian / pug selves · *essay*
 24 Feb 1997 Re: playwrights · *announcement*
 25 Feb 1997 Re: dorn, etcetera · *Dodie Bellamy*
 27 Feb 1997 Political Animals · *essay*
 05 Mar 1997 Re: email address for Steve McCaffery · *Dodie Bellamy*
 05 Mar 1997 Re: email address for Steve McCaffery · *Dodie Bellamy*
 06 Mar 1997 Re: mimeo revolution · *essay*
 06 Mar 1997 Prosodia benefit reading · *announcement*
 10 Mar 1997 Call for reviews, "Traffic" · *Dodie Bellamy*
 11 Mar 1997 Re: "deeply disturbed" · *Dodie Bellamy*
 13 Mar 1997 upcoming at Small Press Traffic · *announcement*
 13 Mar 1997 Re: A branch off the "Disturbed" thread · *Dodie Bellamy*
 18 Mar 1997 Re: formally disturbed · *Dodie Bellamy*
 19 Mar 1997 Astrology poetics/Spicer's "Language" · *essay*
 19 Mar 1997 Re: Spicer's "Language" · *Dodie Bellamy*
 19 Mar 1997 SPT: Pamela Lu and Ann Verornica Simon · *announcement*
 24 Mar 1997 Dodie Bellamy takes L.A. · *Dodie Bellamy*
 31 Mar 1997 Killian/Spicer and an appeal · *announcement*
 31 Mar 1997 "The Schwimmer Effect" · *announcement*
 03 Apr 1997 Re: catching up on S.F. readings · *essay*
 03 Apr 1997 elephant(itis) · *Dodie forwarding a cultural-studies parody lifted from another listserv*
 04 Apr 1997 Re: Time Change · *Dodie Bellamy*
 09 Apr 1997 The Stranger gets stranger · *Dodie Bellamy*
 09 Apr 1997 Re: denver conference etc... · *essay*
 10 Apr 1997 Re: LAURA NYRO (one child born to carry on, etc....) · *essay*
 14 Apr 1997 Re: George Wills and the Imago of Alan Ginsbuerg, in the 2nd circle · *Dodie Bellamy*
 14 Apr 1997 Re: Fifth Column · *Dodie Bellamy*
 14 Apr 1997 Re: George Wills and the Imago of Alan Ginsbuerg, in the 2nd circle · *Dodie Bellamy*
 14 Apr 1997 Re: George Wills and the Imago of Alan Ginsbuerg, in the 2nd circle · *Dodie Bellamy*
 18 Apr 1997 Re: Joe Dunn · *essay*
 18 Apr 1997 Re: What is white · *Dodie Bellamy*
 18 Apr 1997 Re: What is white · *Dodie Bellamy*
 21 Apr 1997 Re: lodging for Poetry and the Public Sphere · *essay*
 13 May 1997 Re: Jenny's First Poetry Reading · *Dodie Bellamy*
 14 May 1997 No prizes · *essay*
 14 May 1997 Gladman's Clamour · *Dodie Bellamy*
 14 May 1997 Re: No prizes · *Dodie Bellamy*
 15 May 1997 Re: "voice"? · *Dodie Bellamy*
 16 May 1997 (no subject) · *Dodie Bellamy*
 17 May 1997 Re: Kara Walker's "voice" · *Dodie Bellamy*
 17 May 1997 Re: Kara Walker's "voice" · *Dodie Bellamy*
 18 May 1997 Re: "voice"? · *Dodie Bellamy*
 19 May 1997 Re: dirty postmodernism · *essay*
 19 May 1997 Re: cartoon phrases · *Dodie Bellamy*
 19 May 1997 Re: wasn't someone collecting new onomotopoetica...? · *Dodie Bellamy*
 21 May 1997 Re: NEA That Goes "Hmm" · *Dodie Bellamy*
 21 May 1997 Re: Writers and Painters · *Dodie Bellamy*
 22 May 1997 "Horror Tape Script" · *essay*
 26 May 1997 Re: Book Contests/AN IDEA · *Dodie Bellamy*
 27 May 1997 Re: Book Contests/AN IDEA · *Dodie Bellamy*
 27 May 1997 Re: Book Contests/AN IDEA · *Dodie Bellamy*
 27 May 1997 Re: Book Contests/AN IDEA · *Dodie Bellamy*
 28 May 1997 Re: Book Contests/AN IDEA · *Dodie Bellamy*

28 May 1997 Re: Book Contests/AN IDEA · *Dodie Bellamy*
 28 May 1997 Re: Book Contests/AN IDEA · *Dodie Bellamy*
 28 May 1997 Re: Book Contests/AN IDEA · *Dodie Bellamy*
 29 May 1997 Re: S & M, CHB · *Dodie Bellamy*
 01 Jun 1997 Re: debt · *Dodie Bellamy*
 03 Jun 1997 Questions about who is where, etc. Thanks · *essay*
 03 Jun 1997 Re: it's really very simple, he always seems to be saying · *Dodie Bellamy*
 03 Jun 1997 Re: it's really very simple, he always seems to be saying · *Dodie Bellamy*
 04 Jun 1997 Re: apollinaire? · *Dodie Bellamy*
 13 Jun 1997 Re: dearest / let me lick · *Dodie Bellamy*
 13 Jun 1997 Re: appropriateness & current genetic theory · *Dodie's own post, signed, on Kim Dawn's writing*
 13 Jun 1997 Re: appropriateness & current genetic theory · *Dodie Bellamy*
 14 Jun 1997 Re: Reading Kim Dawn.... · *Dodie Bellamy*
 14 Jun 1997 Re: ms. non-provocateur · *Dodie Bellamy*
 14 Jun 1997 Re: ms. non-provocateur · *Dodie Bellamy*
 16 Jun 1997 Re: jwcurry, sondheim, kdawn · *Dodie Bellamy*
 16 Jun 1997 Re: jwcurry, sondheim, kdawn,& Spicer · *essay*
 17 Jun 1997 Re: new quotes from old, new quotes from old... · *Dodie Bellamy*
 20 Jun 1997 Re: Text radicalism and incest radicalism · *Dodie Bellamy*
 30 Jun 1997 Re: identity/poetics · *Dodie Bellamy*
 30 Jun 1997 Re: identity/poetics · *Dodie Bellamy*
 01 Jul 1997 Re: identity and list capital (long) · *Dodie Bellamy*
 01 Jul 1997 play vs. violence · *Dodie Bellamy*
 07 Jul 1997 Re: power in language · *Dodie Bellamy*
 08 Jul 1997 Re: power in language / "violence" · *Dodie Bellamy*
 09 Jul 1997 Re: water's fine here... · *Dodie Bellamy*
 11 Jul 1997 Re: instance of Ashbery · *Dodie Bellamy*
 16 Jul 1997 Re: tumblers · *essay*
 16 Jul 1997 Re: influential writers · *Dodie Bellamy*
 18 Jul 1997 Re: New LVNG Supplemental · *announcement*
 18 Jul 1997 Re: twain -- first deconstructionist? · *Dodie Bellamy*
 19 Jul 1997 Re: Prizes · *essay*
 19 Jul 1997 Re: Words which make People Garbage. · *Dodie Bellamy*
 19 Jul 1997 Poets House · *Dodie Bellamy*
 20 Jul 1997 Re: Words which make People Garbage. · *essay*
 21 Jul 1997 Re: Words which make People Garbage. · *Dodie Bellamy*
 21 Jul 1997 Re: Words which make Herr Garbage. · *Dodie Bellamy*
 21 Jul 1997 fuel for the fire · *Dodie Bellamy*
 21 Jul 1997 Re: Naropa Dopa & Kim Yawn · *Dodie Bellamy*
 22 Jul 1997 Re: Missing word: can you help? · *Dodie Bellamy*
 22 Jul 1997 Re: Missing word: can you help? · *Dodie Bellamy*
 22 Jul 1997 Re: WWWebster! (wwwhere are you?) · *Dodie Bellamy*
 22 Jul 1997 Re: dog days · *Dodie Bellamy*
 23 Jul 1997 Re: dog days · *Dodie Bellamy*
 24 Jul 1997 Re: dog days · *Dodie Bellamy*
 24 Jul 1997 Re: dog days · *Dodie Bellamy*
 28 Jul 1997 Re: execution/myth and poetry · *Dodie Bellamy*
 30 Jul 1997 Anne-Marie Albiach tribute at SPT · *announcement*
 31 Jul 1997 Re: Quantity & Quality · *essay*
 03 Aug 1997 Re: hypothesis and repeatability · *essay*
 08 Aug 1997 Re: "*alternative*avant-garde" · *Dodie Bellamy*
 09 Aug 1997 Anne-Marie Albiach tribute in San Francisco · *announcement*
 11 Aug 1997 Assistance requested · *essay*
 14 Aug 1997 Re: avant garde (chax)/to swear a mighty oath · *Dodie Bellamy*
 16 Aug 1997 Re: BERNADETTE MAYER (fwd) · *Dodie Bellamy*
 25 Aug 1997 Re: Renga for Nancarrow (cont'd) · *Dodie Bellamy*
 29 Aug 1997 Re: By Ear, he said (or is it Bye Ear?) · *Dodie Bellamy*

- 08 Sep 1997 Small Press Traffic's literary soiree · *announcement*
- 22 Sep 1997 Re: Red's "86" · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 22 Sep 1997 Re: Red's "86" · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 22 Sep 1997 Torres/Scalapino at SPT · *announcement*
- 23 Sep 1997 Re: reading at SPT/New College, Oct 3 · *announcement*
- 24 Sep 1997 Re: Try again Charles - this is exactly how it came to me · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 25 Sep 1997 Re: The Name & the Paradox of its Contents · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 25 Sep 1997 Caroline Bergvall/Kevin Killian in San Francisco · *announcement*
- 25 Sep 1997 Re: The Name & the Paradox of its Contents · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 26 Sep 1997 Re: The Name & the Paradox of its Contents · *essay*
- 26 Sep 1997 Re: The Name & the Paradox of its Contents · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 26 Sep 1997 Re: The Name & the Paradox of its Contents · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 28 Sep 1997 Re: The Name & the Paradox of its Contents · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 28 Sep 1997 Re: The Name & the Paradox of its Contents · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 28 Sep 1997 Stepping into Steve Carll's shoes · *essay*
- 29 Sep 1997 Re: working class thread · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 30 Sep 1997 Re: People of Color · *essay*
- 30 Sep 1997 Re: Social Tangles · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 30 Sep 1997 Re: Social Tangles · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 30 Sep 1997 Re: Social Tangles · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 16 Oct 1997 Luisa Futoransky, Sarah Menefee--ASAP at SPT · *announcement*
- 21 Nov 1997 Davis and in SF · *announcement*
- 22 Nov 1997 Carole Maso in San Francisco · *announcement*
- 25 Nov 1997 Friends of Kathy Acker · *a forwarded fundraising appeal for the dying Kathy Acker, written and signed by Matias Viegner and others — not Kevin's own writing*
- 05 Dec 1997 Raddle Moon reading in San Francisco · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 05 Dec 1997 SPT: Shurin, Ferguson, Allison, Gomez · *announcement*
- 16 Dec 1997 Kathleen Fraser tribute · *announcement*
- 18 Dec 1997 Ngai and Farrell at SPT · *announcement*

1998

- 04 Jan 1998 January Readings at SPT · *announcement*
- 07 Jan 1998 Hard Press · *forward of the Hard Press website announcement (Kathleen Seidel's notice, relayed)*
- 08 Jan 1998 The World's Best Literature As Yet Translated Into English · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 12 Jan 1998 Under the Influence · *essay*
- 19 Jan 1998 List member in the news · *announcement*
- 28 Jan 1998 next week at Small Press Traffic · *announcement*
- 29 Jan 1998 the older gals · *essay*
- 30 Jan 1998 Missing generation · *essay*
- 01 Feb 1998 old/young academic/non etc · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 09 Feb 1998 Re: freud's trick · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 09 Feb 1998 Duncan tribute at Small Press Traffic · *announcement*
- 10 Feb 1998 Raworth & Flores at SPT · *announcement*
- 17 Feb 1998 Dahlen/Gudath at SPT · *announcement*
- 18 Feb 1998 dead frog's legs touched by electrodes · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 19 Feb 1998 I and you · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 22 Feb 1998 (no subject) · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 24 Feb 1998 Retallack, Swensen, Retallack at SPT · *announcement*
- 04 Mar 1998 Tripwire · *essay*
- 04 Mar 1998 Saidenberg, Mullen, Nielsen at SPT · *announcement*
- 18 Mar 1998 Heller/objectivists/SPT · *announcement*
- 18 Mar 1998 Nepotistic plug · *essay*
- 21 Mar 1998 Another plug (non-nepotistic), for SWARM · *essay*
- 28 Mar 1998 Re: women and men in conversation · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 30 Mar 1998 Re: women/men/communication/cherry blossoms · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 31 Mar 1998 Re: to dodie/wmn's wrkshps/my personal story · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 31 Mar 1998 Moving Borders reading at SPT · *announcement*
- 01 Apr 1998 Re: more boring chit-chat · *Dodie Bellamy*

- 01 Apr 1998 Re: screening process/feminism · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 02 Apr 1998 TIM MILLER'S REPORT FROM THE SUPREME COURT · *Dodie's forward of Tim Miller's Supreme Court dispatch — not Kevin's writing*
- 03 Apr 1998 Standard's standards · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 06 Apr 1998 Re: Alien thoughts · *essay*
- 11 Apr 1998 A. Berrigan/Y. Morrison at Canessa Park · *announcement*
- 11 Apr 1998 SF catsitting gig · *announcement*
- 12 Apr 1998 Re: Moving Borders · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 12 Apr 1998 Re: local issue: byrkit performance · *announcement*
- 20 Apr 1998 Donahue, Roberson at SPT · *announcement*
- 20 Apr 1998 Small Press Traffic webpage · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 20 Apr 1998 more readings you don't want to miss · *essay*
- 21 Apr 1998 Re: Small Press Traffic webpage · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 21 Apr 1998 Re: Speaking of George Oppen · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 08 May 1998 Marianne Moore rocks at SPT · *announcement*
- 11 May 1998 Bellamy/Gluck at SPT · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 16 May 1998 ca state funding for the arts · *forwarded chain-letter petition for California arts funding*
- 20 May 1998 Anne Carson at SPT · *announcement*
- 28 May 1998 Vs. Spicer · *essay*
- 03 Jun 1998 Poets Theater in San Francisco, round 10 · *announcement*
- 04 Jun 1998 Jeff Derksen directory assistance · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 09 Jun 1998 Killian, Gluck, and more in SF · *announcement*
- 13 Jun 1998 non 3 intro · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 15 Jun 1998 Re: Poultry & \$\$ (Don't count your chickens...) · *clearly Dodie — she writes of "Kevin and I" in the third person and signs off "x, Dodie"*
- 16 Jun 1998 Re: Good, there are no lions in the street · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 17 Jun 1998 B. Watten ends SPT season · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 18 Jun 1998 Re: giving up frenchified sex for good · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 30 Jun 1998 TIM MILLER RESPONSE TO SUPREMES DECISION · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 03 Jul 1998 Inferno, Succubus, Gates of Hell and More · *essay*
- 04 Jul 1998 July 10th double dilemma · *bare logistical correction to the film-listing above (a scheduling conflict)*
- 13 Jul 1998 Olson/Ojai · *essay*
- 18 Jul 1998 forgotten women · *essay*
- 23 Jul 1998 CS Giscombe directory assistance · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 28 Jul 1998 postfeminist playground · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 01 Aug 1998 Re: postfeminist POETICS JOURNAL? · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 01 Aug 1998 Two new books I've read · *announcement*
- 04 Aug 1998 Bellamy reading in SF · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 07 Aug 1998 Mina review · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 27 Aug 1998 poetry on the web · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 13 Sep 1998 PESSOA · *essay*
- 16 Sep 1998 This week: San Francisco events · *announcement*
- 22 Sep 1998 Fanny Howe in San Francisco! · *announcement*
- 29 Sep 1998 October 3 "Cirque de Soiree" in San Francisco · *essay*
- 04 Oct 1998 San Francisco Spicer celebrations · *announcement*
- 14 Oct 1998 Laura [Riding] Jackson conference question · *essay*
- 15 Oct 1998 Ethics in Writing · *clearly Dodie ("Hi, this is Dodie") — a course-reading query in her own voice*
- 15 Oct 1998 Lopez, Selby at SPT · *announcement*
- 22 Oct 1998 Alice Notley in SF TONIGHT! · *announcement*
- 22 Oct 1998 MacCormack & Silliman in SF · *announcement*
- 23 Oct 1998 Spicer's Lorca · *essay*
- 24 Oct 1998 Spicer, Foster, Notley, Mac Adams · *essay*
- 27 Oct 1998 Re: anagrams (fwd) · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 02 Nov 1998 SPT off-site events this weekend · *announcement*
- 05 Nov 1998 Bellamy & Buuck at Canessa Park · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 10 Nov 1998 Re: Jack Spicer commemorated · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 10 Nov 1998 Noah De Lissovoy info · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 12 Nov 1998 click click · *Dodie Bellamy*

- 13 Nov 1998 and the winners are--- · *essay*
- 02 Dec 1998 SPT: Lipstick 11 Reading · *announcement*
- 06 Dec 1998 Erasing · *essay*
- 09 Dec 1998 L. Shaw talks F. O'Hara in SF · *announcement*
- 10 Dec 1998 Poets of the MLA · *announcement*

1999

- 12 Jan 1999 Gizzi and Thackrey at SPT · *announcement*
- 13 Jan 1999 "The Vegetable Kingdom" · *essay*
- 16 Jan 1999 "The Kink of Chris Komater" · *announcement*
- 26 Jan 1999 Myung Mi Kim residency at SPT · *announcement*
- 12 Feb 1999 Burns, Fodaski, Armantrout, Ortiz, in San Francisco · *essay*
- 17 Feb 1999 prose: definitions · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 25 Feb 1999 Two Guys Named Jeff: Clark and Derksen at SPT · *announcement*
- 11 Mar 1999 Page Mothers Report, part 1 · *essay*
- 12 Mar 1999 Page Mothers Report, part 2 · *essay*
- 13 Mar 1999 Page Mothers Report, part 3 · *essay*
- 16 Mar 1999 Re: of Mothers & Daughters · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 22 Mar 1999 Re: of Mothers & Daughters · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 25 Mar 1999 Stevens date · *essay*
- 25 Mar 1999 Re: class & gender · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 30 Apr 1999 SPT summer internship · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 04 May 1999 Berkson/Friedman at SPT · *announcement*
- 20 May 1999 Death of James Broughton · *essay*
- 02 Jun 1999 Friday, June 4, Re: Reading The New American Poetry · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 08 Jun 1999 catsitting in SF · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 08 Jun 1999 SF summer prose workshop · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 24 Jun 1999 epistle · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 21 Jul 1999 persona · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 01 Aug 1999 Re: Pound and the Bollingen Prize · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 04 Aug 1999 Re: Boston 99 · *essay*
- 16 Aug 1999 book search-help! · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 18 Aug 1999 Re: from a Talk on Class · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 23 Aug 1999 summer prose workshop reading · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 24 Aug 1999 Re: Charles Macaulay · *essay*
- 01 Sep 1999 Re: more power to the affluent poets · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 09 Sep 1999 hypertext suggestions · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 15 Sep 1999 Re: hypertext suggestions · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 15 Sep 1999 volunteers sought for SPT soiree · *announcement*
- 29 Oct 1999 Donald M. Allen in San Francisco · *announcement*
- 31 Oct 1999 Tina Darragh & P. Inman · *announcement*
- 02 Nov 1999 Local Howler · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 10 Nov 1999 Re: Business, class, access · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 01 Dec 1999 "Mirage #4/Period[ical]" #89, Atlanta issue · *essay*
- 07 Dec 1999 Re: CLASS · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 15 Dec 1999 Bay Area Now Walking Tour · *announcement*

2000

- 02 Jan 2000 End of Century Reading Material · *essay*
- 25 Jan 2000 catsitter needed in San Francisco · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 01 Feb 2000 Kevin K. & Dodie B. live in NYC Feb. 16 · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 04 Feb 2000 Harryette Mullen at Mills College Feb. 9 · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 07 Feb 2000 Anne Carson/Renee Gladman UC Berkeley Holloway Poetry Reading
· *a reading announcement — directions and all — forwarded to the list at Chris Chen's request*
- 14 Feb 2000 Re: gender again · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 14 Feb 2000 Re: gender count (or whatever it was, can't remember) · *essay*
- 23 Feb 2000 Re: Los desaparecidos & humor · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 28 Feb 2000 Re: gender · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 07 Mar 2000 Re: gender · *Dodie Bellamy*

Series

- 08 Mar 2000 Re: gender · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 08 Mar 2000 Re: gender · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 10 Mar 2000 Re: Perloff/Vendler/Scharf/Burt Panel in New York · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 13 Mar 2000 Dario Argento in San Jose · *essay*
- 08 May 2000 description · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 08 May 2000 Re: description · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 07 Jun 2000 Re: feminism, narrative, and the avant-garde · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 12 Jun 2000 "The Shakers" in San Francisco · *essay*
- 03 Jul 2000 Re: femme · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 05 Jul 2000 What I saw at the Orono Conference 2000, Part I · *essay*
- 06 Jul 2000 What I saw at the Orono Conference 2000, part II · *essay*
- 09 Jul 2000 What I Saw at the Orono Conference 2000, part III · *essay*
- 13 Jul 2000 From David Bromige · *a forward of David Bromige's Orono message, entirely in Bromige's own voice and signature*
- 14 Jul 2000 What I Saw at the Orono Conference 2000, Part IV (final installment) · *essay*
- 03 Aug 2000 "Democracy, the Last Campaign" · *essay*
- 04 Sep 2000 assimilation and purity & language in lingua franca · *essay*
- 10 Sep 2000 Description follow-through · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 11 Sep 2000 Re: assimilation vs. purity · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 20 Sep 2000 Word of Mouth event in Oakland, CA · *announcement*
- 01 Oct 2000 Abigail Child's San Francisco Retrospective · *announcement*
- 10 Oct 2000 Tom Carey and Kevin Killian · *announcement*
- 11 Oct 2000 Re: Colloquium · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 27 Oct 2000 body memoirs · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 05 Nov 2000 3 things to do · *essay*
- 12 Nov 2000 Re: body memoirs · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 26 Dec 2000 review of Myles' Cool for You · *Dodie Bellamy*

2001

- 10 Feb 2001 Feb. 15: Eileen Myles at Mills College · *a reading notice for Eileen Myles, posted from the shared household account*
- 15 Mar 2001 Re: Lammies & the small press · *essay*
- 02 Apr 2001 Bellamy & Killian email change · *a change-of-address notice*
- 17 Apr 2001 Fwd: *LISA JARNOT READING APRIL 24* · *announcement*
- 18 Apr 2001 Fwd: Subj: It's Moving Target time! Fri. April 27 and Sat 28, 8:30 · *a forwarded flyer for the Moving Target performance series*
- 21 Jun 2001 Re: poets in film · *essay*
- 27 Jun 2001 Poets in Film · *essay*
- 02 Jul 2001 Poets in Film · *essay*
- 11 Jul 2001 Poets in Film (San Francisco, Friday July 13) · *announcement*
- 31 Jul 2001 Reading, San Francisco, Sunday, August 5 · *announcement*
- 10 Aug 2001 "Poets in Film" re-opened with new evidence! · *essay*
- 17 Aug 2001 Re: Cynthia Plaster Caster · *Dodie Bellamy*
- 06 Sep 2001 George thoughts · *announcement*
- 26 Sep 2001 White Rabbit · *essay*
- 01 Oct 2001 Ugh post of Gary · *essay*
- 08 Oct 2001 If you're in San Francisco this week · *announcement*
- 07 Nov 2001 "The American Objectivists" and our auction · *essay*
- 20 Nov 2001 "Low Blue Flame" · *a one-line plug for an online interview*
- 30 Nov 2001 Re: With Strings · *essay*

2002

- 13 Jan 2002 Poets Theater Opening San Francisco Friday 1/18/02 · *essay*
- 09 Apr 2002 Reanimate Oprah · *Dodie Bellamy writing from Kevin's account, forwarding an Oprah Book Club petition*
- 13 Apr 2002 D. Kovac/S. Young reading in San Francisco · *announcement*
- 15 May 2002 Re: trials in literature · *essay*
- 21 Jun 2002 time travel / paradox, and also, Eric Giraud? · *essay*
- 10 Jul 2002 Re: //// play on words - with address · *a one-line guess at what city a play was in*

24 Jul 2002 Re: language · *essay*
30 Jul 2002 Re: Attacks · *essay*
05 Aug 2002 If you're interested in Kylie . . . · *essay*
07 Aug 2002 Re: Myung Mi Kim · *essay*
12 Aug 2002 Bowie events in San Francisco · *announcement*
12 Aug 2002 Re: music · *essay*
16 Aug 2002 Books · *essay*
16 Aug 2002 Re: Books · *essay*
03 Sep 2002 If you're in San Francisco this Friday Sept 6 · *essay*
05 Sep 2002 Re: Zero Star Hotel by Anselm Berrigan, new from Edge Books · *essay*
11 Sep 2002 Re: humor theory · *essay*
10 Oct 2002 Re: women in The New American Poetry · *essay*
13 Oct 2002 From the horse's mouth · *essay*
28 Oct 2002 Advice sought · *essay*
17 Nov 2002 Carol Muske · *essay*
25 Nov 2002 San Francisco Memorial Reading for Steve Abbott · *essay*

2003

23 Jan 2003 Baudelaire bio · *essay*
02 Feb 2003 Cubism and literature · *essay*
22 Mar 2003 More questions · *essay*
14 Apr 2003 Enthusiastic · *essay*
15 Apr 2003 Enough about Sylvester now more about me · *essay*
01 May 2003 Re: help with Ashbery · *essay*
07 May 2003 Acker tribute, tonight, San Francisco, City Lights · *announcement*
30 May 2003 Re: Stein in the NYer · *essay*
08 Aug 2003 Re: PRE-PUBLICATION OFFER on OPERA by BARRY SCHWABSKY · *essay*
13 Aug 2003 SF reading Thursday Aug 14. Free. · *announcement*
26 Aug 2003 Re: ebbe borregaard · *essay*
27 Aug 2003 Re: Discount on WHAT IS POETRY: CONVERSATIONS WITH THE AMERICAN AVANT-GARDE · *essay*
28 Aug 2003 Re: Komunyakaa's Best of · *essay*
29 Aug 2003 Re: SF Poet Lawrence Fixel dies · *essay*
03 Sep 2003 OMG Eye Witness!! In San Francisco · *essay*
11 Sep 2003 Re: query · *essay*
25 Sep 2003 What people are reading & Carla Harryman's play · *essay*
14 Oct 2003 Re: i am not a nut; elect me! · *essay*
15 Oct 2003 Re: Kevin's Play Is Where? · *essay*
04 Nov 2003 He, Don Juan, a Translation · *essay*
07 Nov 2003 Ian Wallace, Magazine Piece in San Francisco · *announcement*
07 Nov 2003 Nine Lives, Saturday event, San Francisco, Small Press Traffic. · *announcement*
09 Nov 2003 "17 Reasons," Public Art in San Francisco · *announcement*
17 Nov 2003 Re: is there a problem using the word hermaphrodite in a poem? · *essay*

2004

23 Mar 2004 Re: 2nd to last post! · *essay*
16 Jun 2004 Re: queries: · *essay*
29 Jul 2004 What I Saw at the Orono Conference 2004, part 1 · *essay*
29 Jul 2004 What I Saw at the Orono Conference, part 2 · *essay*
30 Jul 2004 What I Saw at the Orono Conference 2004, part 3 · *essay*
30 Jul 2004 What I Saw at the Orono Conference 2004, part 4 · *essay*
31 Jul 2004 What I Saw at the Orono Conference 2004, part 5 · *essay*
31 Jul 2004 What I Saw at the Orono Conference, part 6 · *essay*
01 Aug 2004 What I Saw at the Orono Conference 2004, part 7 · *essay*
03 Aug 2004 What I Saw at the Orono Conference 2004, part 8 · *essay*
05 Aug 2004 My corrections · *essay*
08 Aug 2004 New Titles 2004 Krupskaya Books · *Krupskaya Books new-titles catalogue, descriptions and blurbs by others*
01 Sep 2004 Pound citation · *essay*

- 03 Sep 2004 Reading and Book Party for Rob Halpern's RUMORED PLACE · *announcement*
25 Sep 2004 New Play by Kevin Killian and D-L Alvarez · *announcement*
24 Oct 2004 A Possible Attribution · *essay*
27 Oct 2004 Seance weekend in Los Angeles · *flyer for the CalArts Séance conference, mostly a pasted program*

2005

- 01 Oct 2005 Book Launch on Tuesday--in San Francisco. · *essay*
14 Dec 2005 Re: Ahadada @ Beyond Baroque, December 17th · *essay*

2006

- 08 Jan 2006 A Podcast with Me On It · *essay*
16 Mar 2006 Re: A Candle for who? · *essay*
12 Jun 2006 What We Saw at the Weldon Kees Retrospective · *essay*
06 Aug 2006 new email addresses for Bellamy and Killian · *bare logistical notice of new email addresses*
07 Nov 2006 Re: POETS IN NEED · *essay*
13 Nov 2006 Sam D'Allesandro Tribute at USF (San Francisco) Wednesday · *announcement*
03 Dec 2006 Re: Tragic news -- kari edwards · *essay*

2007

- 07 Jun 2007 Will any of you be at Art Basel next week? · *essay*
11 Jul 2007 John Wieners, A BOOK OF PROPHECIES · *essay*
15 Jul 2007 Three events · *announcement*
03 Sep 2007 If you're in San Francisco on September 7 · *essay*
09 Sep 2007 If you're in San Francisco, and want to see something fantastic, · *essay*
09 Sep 2007 Don Waters · *relay of a City Lights reading notice with publisher copy; little of his own hand*
17 Sep 2007 Blaser reading in San Francisco last Sunday · *essay*
02 Oct 2007 Re: Boston · *announcement*

2008

- 10 Mar 2008 Two new books from Krupskaya · *essay*
18 May 2008 Re: bernadette mayer · *essay*
19 May 2008 Sad news in the East Bay · *announcement*
05 Jul 2008 Memoir of Kiki up at Dennis Cooper's blog · *a bare pointer to a memoir posted on Dennis Cooper's blog, with nothing of the memoir itself reproduced*
11 Sep 2008 For San Francisco fans, Taylor Mead comes to Yerba Buena · *essay*
14 Dec 2008 Re: toys · *essay*
15 Dec 2008 Toys and Spicer · *essay*

2009

- 04 Feb 2009 Re: Eleven Eleven #6 · *a two-line congratulation wrapped around a forward of Hugh Behm-Steinberg's own Eleven Eleven announcement*

2010

- 23 Feb 2010 New Books by Andrea Brady and Ryan Murphy from KRUPSKAYA · *essay*
22 Mar 2010 Re: Michael, who I never knew · *essay*
26 Mar 2010 Re: anything anymore anywhere spring 2010 out now!! · *essay*
28 Jun 2010 Re: Query: Poetry Benchmarks 1971 · *essay*

2011

- 14 Aug 2011 About Elizabeth Bishop, does anyone know.... · *announcement*

2013

- 30 Jan 2013 Re: Spicer query · *essay*

2014

- 23 Jan 2014 Re: Poetics List (1993-2014) · *essay*

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